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THE 16TH INFANTRY

1798 - 1946

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U.S. Army. 16th Infantry.

THE 16TH INFANTRY

1798 - 1946

LT. JOHN W. BAUMGARTNER - 1ST SGT. AL DE POTO
SGT. WILLIAM FRACCIO - CPL. SAMMY FULLER

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Artist William Fraccio, himself a 16th Infantry Rifleman, made this drawing of a "doggie" loaded down with equiment as he waits for the Roer River Crossing.

The man shown here is typical of the American soldier who made the 16th Infantry great. Not too prepossessing physically, not born to fight, but determined to fight when necessary, anxious to get the thing over with, burdened with heavy equipment and ammunition, often hungry, always either too hot or too cold, extremely vocal when he thought someone hadn't done his job, yet jeering his own weaknesses and fears, he was the man who took this regiment through nearly three bitter years of campaigning to ultimate victory.

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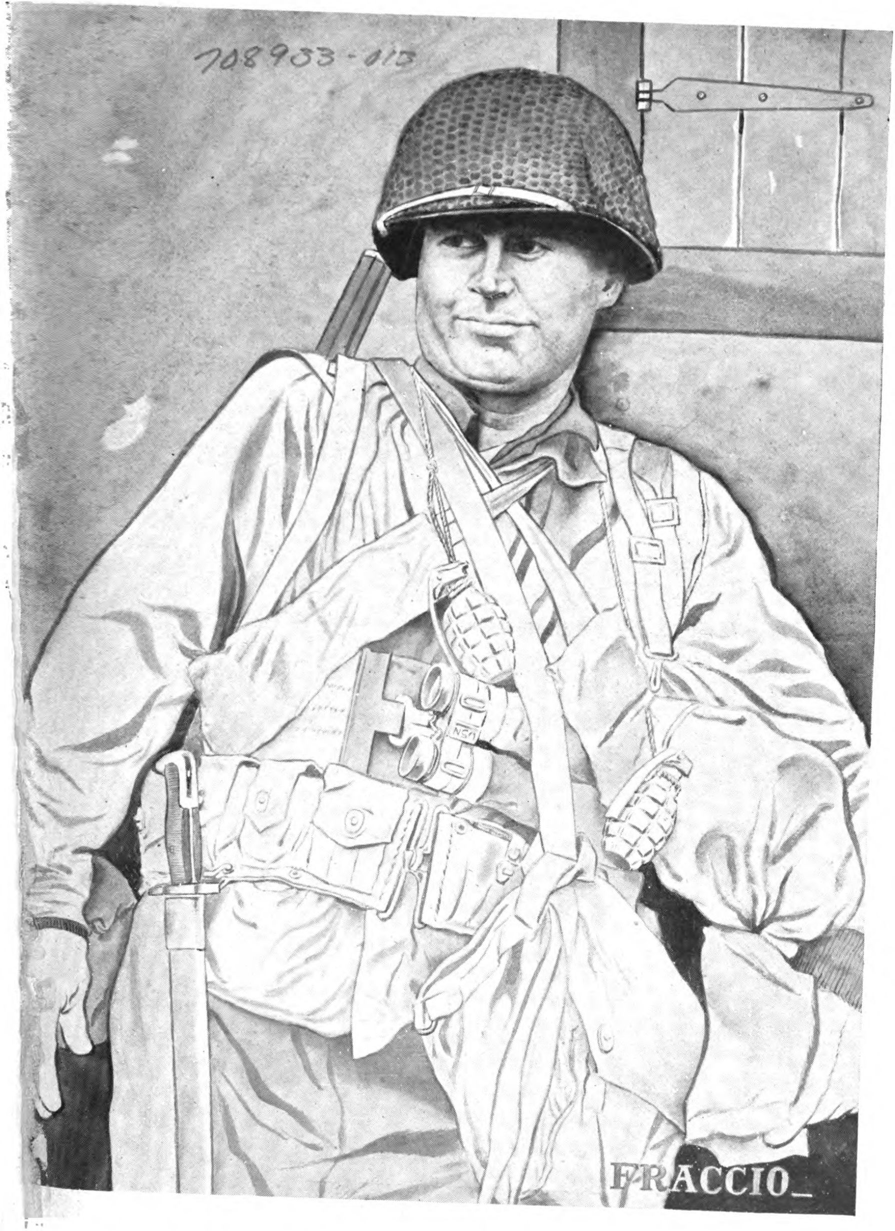
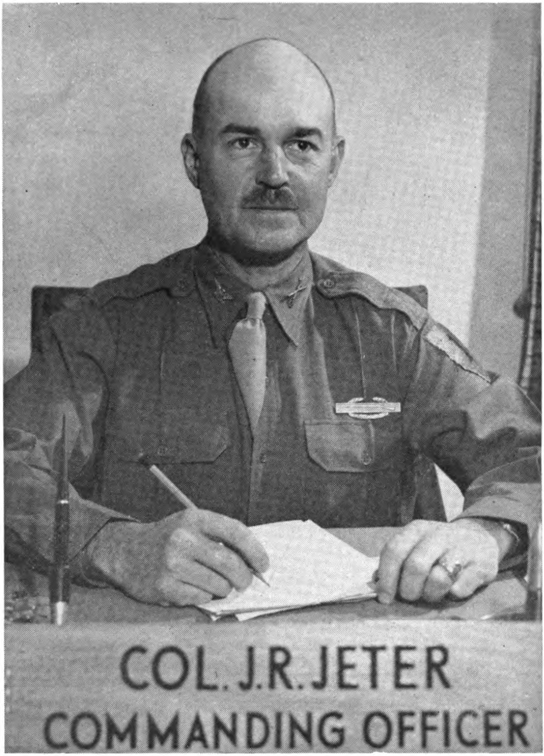




Col. John R. Jeter, present regimental commander, numbers among previous assignments periods as instructor at The Infantry School; commander of the 424th, 394th and 358th Infantry Regiments; Chief of Staff, 99th Division; and Assistant Chief of Staff, 1st Division. His decorations include the Legion of Merit, Silver Star, Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, and several foreign awards.

CHAPTER I

The history of the 16th Infantry Regiment is a story of battle.

Chapultepec, Antietam, Gettysburg, San Juan Hill, Soissons, St. Mihiel, the Argonne, Oran, Kasserine Pass, El Guettar, Gela, Troina, Normandy, Aachen, the Ardennes, the Siegfried Line . . . bright, bloody pages in United States Military annals . . . all those, and many other major engagements are in the record of the 16th.

In every war since the Revolution, the armed forces of the United States have had a 16th Infantry. The first unit to bear the distinguished number was organized in 1798 when war with France threatened the existence of the infant republic. In activation for only two years, this orginal 16th was disbanded when war no longer appeared a prospect.

The next 16th Infantry to make its appearance was organized on January 11, 1812, for service against Great Britain. Actively engaged in 1813, it fought in the battles of Fort George, Stony Creek, Crysler's Field and Williamsburg.

With cessation of hostilities in 1815, the Regiment was combined with four others — the Sixth, Twenty-Second, Twenty-Third and Thirty Second to form the present day Second Infantry Regiment. The battle honors due the 16th for the War of 1812 are, therefore, carried by the Second.

In the short-lived war against Mexico a 16th Infantry Regiment was organized February 11, 1847 and fought through the actions at Chapultepec, Papagayas and Mexico City. Again it went out of existence when the war ended, having been active for about 18 months when disbanded on August 10, 1848.

Finally at the outbreak of the Civil War, the present ancestor of today's 16th Infantry was formed. On May 4, 1861, three eight company battalions were mustered into service at Fort Independence (Boston) Massachusetts. Every reorganization of the Army since that date has included some unit continuing the direct lineage of the 16th to the present.

This Civil War 16th Infantry served throughout that period of hostilities, participating in thirty engagements. New luster was added to the history of past accomplishments when the regiment particularly distinguished itself at Antietam, Petersburg and Gettysburg. In this last battle the regiment lost fifty percent of its strength.

The 16th continued in existence after the war. In 1866, Congress authorized forty-five infantry regiments. Each of the old battalions became the nucleus of a regiment. The First retained the 16th Infantry designation, the Second became the 25th Infantry, and the Third, the 34th Infantry.

From 1869 to 1877 the 16th handled the difficult role of pacification troops in the South. In 1877 the regiment moved west across the Mississippi and began a gruelling three year campaign in the Indian Wars.

As a part of General Buell's flying colum, the 16th worked up through New Mexico and Arizona, driving the hostile tribesmen before it. It participated in the famous "Dull Knife" campaign, played an important part in General McKenzie's subjugation of the warring natives and finally brought law and order out of the Ute uprisings in Colorado.

With peace restored in the West, elements of the regiment were scattered about various garrisons throughout the newly settled West. Garrison life with its monotony filled the years until the outbreak of the Spanish-American War.

Battalions and companies were assembled at Tampa, Florida, in May of 1898. Very shortly, it was one of the first American organizations to disembark at Siboney, Cuba.

Almost immediately the regiment plunged into the short, bloody Cuban campaign. On July 11th it lost 7 officers and 112 enlisted men at the "Bloody Ford" at the base of San Juan Hill.

Despite severe losses, the 16th assaulted the famous ridge and it was two of its men — Sergeant Diehl and Corporal Van Horne — who planted the first American flag to fly from the Spanish blockhouse on the hill.

The comment of a neutral military observer who witnessed this charge is interesting. With the Fifth U. S. Corps was a German military attache noted for his appreciation of things military. After the capture of San Juan, this officer reported . . . "The dash and spirit displayed by the 6th and 16th regiments of infantry which came under my immediate observation, were marvelous." Less than two decades later crack Prussian troops were to feel the irrepressible "dash and spirit" of these same American doughboys.

Decimated by the toll of many battles and fever-ridden, the 16th returned to Montauk Point, Long Island, New York, in August, 1898. Less than half its strength remained available for duty.

The regiment went into camp. Duration-of-war men were discharged. Recruiting began and full peace-time strength was built up. A move was made, half way across the continent, to Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas.

Training of the new men went on at this station until the summer of 1899 when the 16th embarked for its first tour of duties in the Philip-

CHAPTER III

For twenty years after returning from France, the 16th Infantry was stationed at Fort Jay, Governor's Island, New York. Stationed at New York City's front door, the Regiment became so closely associated with the life of the city that it finally came to be known as "New York's Own".

During its tour of duty, the 16th took part in many activities of importance in the city. Frequently it was called upon to furnish a guard of honor for important personages visiting the United States. The most prominent of these were the King and Queen of England.

The regiment also participated in many ceremonies in the city and its vicinity and formed a large part of the military representation at the New York World Fair. Among one of its less conspicuous, but nevertheless important assignments, was the responsibility for the safe transportation of billions of dollars of gold from the eastern coast to Fort Knox, Kentucky.

Not all of its activities were confined to ceremonies. Training continued. In its last year at Fort Jay, the 16th put that training to practice in extended maneuvers in Georgia, Louisiana, and in the Winthrop area in upper New York State.

In early 1941, as war clouds once again covered the nation, the 16th ended its long association with New York City. The First Division was assembling at Fort Devens. Filled to full war strength, 3297 men, by the influx of some 1500 recruits during the preceding two months, the 16th, commanded at that time by Colonel Paul W. Baade, was reviewed on February 20th by Lt. General Hugh A. Drum, commander of the First Army. This review, in the nature of a farewell to "New York's Own" preceded the departure for Devens by only a few days.

The Third Battalion, alone in the regiment, trained in amphibious operations at Edgewood Arsenal along with the Third Battalion of the 18th Infantry. Following a period there, the battalion embarked on a transport which, in December, 1940, took them to Puerto Rico for joint amphibious operations with the Navy. This training continued until the battalion rejoned the regiment at Ft. Devens, Massachusetts, in February, 1941.

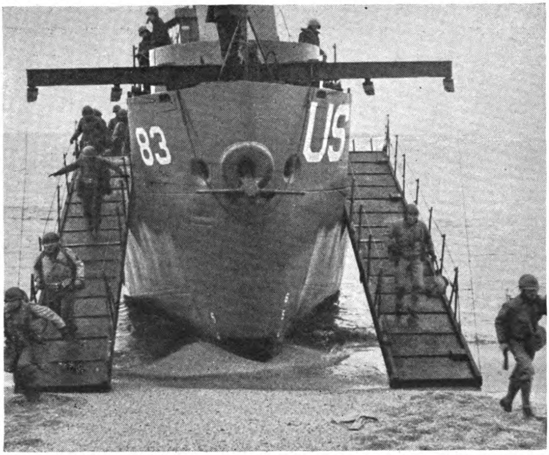
The regiment operated out of Devens for more than a year. Training became more and more intensive. Garrison training was supplemented by maneuvers — maneuvers in which the spirit was there but the equipment was lacking.

During this period, Col. Henry B. Cheadle became Regimental Commander. It was under his command that the 16th began its Odyssey. Preceding the balance of the regiment was the Second Battalion which, on July 1, 1942, left Indiantown Gap, the 16th's last post in the states, proceeded to New York City and boarded two small vessels, "HMT Maloja" and the "Duchess of Bedford".

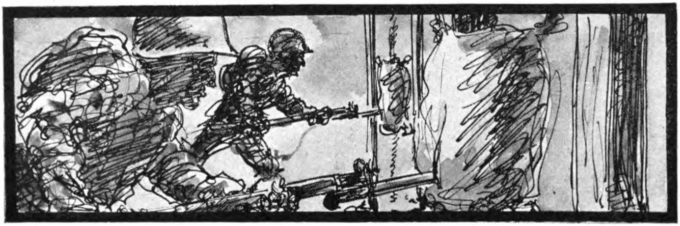
Landing at Liverpool after a rough crossing, the battalion moved immediately to Tidworth Barracks to prepare a camp for the remainder of the regiment.

During the first week in August, the remaining units of the 16th left Indiantown Gap and at Pier 90, in New York, boarded the "Queen Mary" which was just then starting her series of swift round trips which were to send thousands of men to England on her broad decks and in her cavernous holds. Along with the 16th went the other organizations of the entire First Division.

Thus, the 16th became a part of the FIRST combat division to sail for England!



Training in amphibious operations occupied the 16th most of the time during its non-combat periods in World War II.



CHAPTER IV

Dropping her escort a few hundred miles from New York "The Queen" sped without protection across the Atlantic. Huge as she was, the great ship was crowded from stem to stern and living was uncomfortable during the swift voyage. Troops slept in shifts ate in shifts — only two meals a day. Some foresighted individuals had brought food aboard with them and eked out the missing meal with their carefully guarded hoard.

On the rainy foggy morning of August 7th, the 16th loaded into lighters and disembarked at Gurrock, Scotland — near Glasgow.

To the wild skirling of the pipes in a Scottish Band, the regiment entrained immediately and departed for Tidworth Barracks, Hants, not far from Salisbury, in Southeastern England.

The Regimental staff that waded into plans for further training in assaults and amphibious operations, at that time, had Colonel Henry B. Cheadle as commander; Lt. Col. John H. Matthews, executive officer; Capt. Carl W. Plitt, S-1; 1st Lt. Victor P. Brosokas, S-2; Capt. Carl W. Steuzel, S-3; and Capt. Herbert Hicks, S-4.

Almost immediately, problems, minor and major began heckling officers and men. Equipment was slow in arriving from debarkation ports; there were few training aids and the training program itself was gigantic beyond any previous conception of regimental military training.

Exhibiting its customary initiative, the 16th plowed ahead, making progress where others marked time. Material at hand was used to the fullest extent. Training aids were improvised. Training now was not for some nebulous future war but for the war at hand, for a landing, an invasion not decades ahead, not years, but just a few weeks away.

Conditioning exercises, including rugged calisthenics, hikes and forced marches began to streamline the individuals and speed up the regiment. Thorough instruction in all infantry weapons was stressed to the utmost. Known distance and combat firing courses were used day after day. Proficiency of the troops improved. Squad, platoon and company problems were executed in deadly seriousness day after day and night after night. The 16th was not going to be unprepared for the grim work ahead.

Infantrymen storm ashore in a practice landing on English coast. Spring 1944.

In the middle of September, the regiment entrained for Roseneath, Scotland. There amphibious operations were practiced over and over again. Embarkation, debarkation, landings, assaults, all where rehearsed time and again. The historic River Clyde saw American doughboys marching up gangplanks, swarming down landing nets, splashing to shore — drilling, drilling drilling for that first beachhead.

Exercises were coordinated with those of the American Rangers and British commandos. Foul weather a great deal of the time added to the rigors of this period of training.

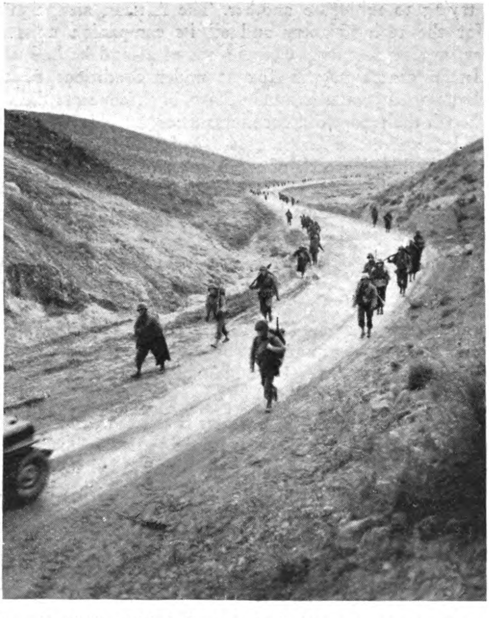
But during that month and the preceding one at Tidworth Barracks, back in England, the pass policy was liberal. Nearly everyone, at some time or other, visited London. The gray old streets of Scotland's ancient cities resounded to the sounds of Americans on leave.

However, on Oct. 15, 1942, it was with a general feeling of relief that officers and men boarded transports for the first test — the first shot at the real thing. Two ships carried the main body of the regiment. There was the "Warwick Castle" and the "Duchess of Bedford", a ship of evil memory in the 16th. Close-packed and poorly ventilated, she became to some of her passengers, the "dirty Duchess". A boat of shallow draft, built originally for the Liverpool-Montreal run, she rolled miserably in rough weather. To other suffering souls who made that trip she was the "drunken Duchess".

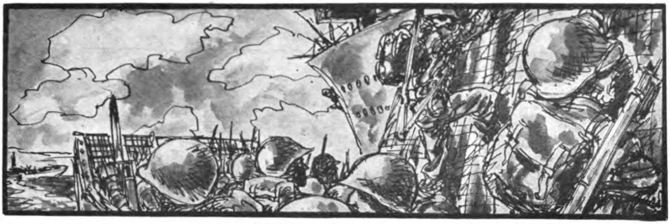
Another landing operations followed — one covering a period of several days. Finally, eleven days after the initial boarding, the two ships, bearing the 16th on its first World War II invasion, slipped out of Grenoch Harbor, Scotland. This was on October 26.

At sea — sailing down the coast of Europe — on November 2, the troops were told their mission — to proceed into the Gulf of Arzew — to land, as Combat Team 16, on the beaches at Arzew and Damesne, clear those beaches, organize at assembly points and proceed against Algeria's principal city, Oran, 25 miles to the west. The 16th Infantry was to invade Africa!

Every man was briefed — rebriefed — then taken through every step of the proposed operation again and again. Every man knew his job, when to do it and how to do it. Everything was to run with clockwork precision. That was the plan!



A unit of the 16th Infantry plods its weary way along a North African road recently cleared of mines.



CHAPTER V

D-Day was the 8th of November — H Hour was 0100. The rugged training in assault landings was about to be tested. American soldiers were to have their first test against the scourge of Europe — against the mighty military machine that had smashed one continent into submission and was trying to subjugate another. The African campaign was about to start for the 16th Infantry and all its companion units assigned to this first attempt to force the German out of a land he had usurped. The North African campaign was fought under conditions of terrain and weather that varied to the extreme. Story book concepts didn't jibe with reality. Though the troops did encounter desert and burning heat, they also found wooded areas and bitter cold. Before the attack on Gafsa the terrain was dotted with woods of scrub oak and pine. Steep, rocky, treacherous hills broken by gullies and chasms, were natural defensive positions for the enemy. It would have been hazardous to traverse them had they been untenanted. Beyond Gafsa was the desert.

Climatic conditions ran the gamut from sweltering heat to freezing cold. It rained and it snowed. It hailed and it sleeted. In the Ousseltia Valley the day would begin moderately cool, become sweltering in the afternoon and freezing at night. Within a period of hours, soldiers would find welcome use for mosquito netting and overcoats and gloves — for insect repellent and raincoats. Four blankets were issued to, and used by, every man.

The beginning of the African winter of 1942 was to be the beginning of a fierce offensive against the formidable Nazi hordes. Swaggering Marshal Rommel — the Desert Fox — commanded his "Afrika Korps" — the elite of the German Army. Swaggering Rommel, who beat upon the gates of Cairo and Alexandria. Within a year his swagger was to become a limp — his vaunted "Afrika Korps" a beaten bunch of disorganized men.

To the east, brilliant General Bernard Montgomery was pounding away at Rommel, forcing him back across the hundreds of miles of desert over which his army had been chased a few months earlier in a continuation of that strange, gigantic tussle in which first the Germans and then the British took turns in driving each other across the endless miles of North African desert.

International complications — corruption — intrigue — thieving natives — changing allegiance of tribal chieftains — ancient cities — surprising customs. That was North Africa in November, 1942.

That was the Mediterranean-bordered top of the Dark Continent which the 16th Infantry was to invade.

It was November 8th — D-Day. H-Hour was at hand.

The transports lay offshore in the Gulf of Arzew. Down the rope nets hanging over their sides swarmed the infantry, dropping into the assault boats.

Natives in a North African area controlled by the 16th.

What followed was not a perfect operation. Every phase did not dovetail with every other phase. This was not a practice landing — this was war and in the real thing some things always go wrong.

The flotilla leader, in command of the boats carrying the Third Battalion couldn't find the landing guide. Searching for him, the flotilla started out without organizing. Thirty minutes of search were fruitless. During the hunt he led a portion of his boats through the formation being organized by the First Battalion. Confusion was still rampant when seven of the original twelve boats from the Third Battalion set out for shore.

A condemnation of this action is not intended. It is cited merely as an example of the many things that can and do go wrong in any military operation, no matter how simple. And, certainly, nothing can be more complex than a major amphibious assault.

The effects of this malfunction were sufficiently minor to permit the advantage of surprise to be retained. Landing virtually undetected, a hasty reorganization took place. The Third Battalion came ashore in the outskirts of Arzew. Some of its elements were mixed up with the 18th Combat Team. One platoon of "K" Company fought the ensuing engagement with the 18th.

After the Third proceeded southwest to its assigned sector, in the vicinity of Damesme, and the First Battalion had landed near St. Leu, the regiment attacked in a generally southerly direction.

In quick succession the nearby small towns fell to the 16th's steady advance. St. Leu, Caseme, Port Aux Poule, La Macta, La Cata, Legrand and Fleurus were the first of hundreds of cities and towns to be taken by the 16th during the next two and one half years of campaigning in Africa, Sicily and Europe.

Once a foothold had been established and a sizeable force built up inland the move began towards Oran, the regimental objective. The First Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. William Cunningham, assembled at Port Aux Poule and moved out towards Oran. The Second Battalion, under Lt. Col. Joseph B. Crawford, assembled at Le Grand, preparatory to moving on Oran; and the Third, commanded by Lt. Col. Frederick A. Gibb (now a Colonel, and for 14 months Regimental Commander) remained at Demesme and its vicinity, prepared to assist the 18th CT in its attack on St. Cloud.

While the First and Second Battalions attacked Oran on the following day, the Third secured the high ground at Assi-ben-Okba, captured the road junction and blocked out the enemy at St. Cloud.

Enemy small arms, mortar and artillery fire held up the battalion at several points and some casualties resulted. Late in the afternoon the battalion, having accomplished its mission, was ordered to withdraw, then proceed to Oran. Enroute to Oran, heavy enemy resistance was encountered at Arcole.

The town was taken only after a four-hour skirmish. Ordered to join the Second Battalion, the Third was the victim, on November 10, of one of those mishaps that are a part of battle. Not realzing the proximitiy of friendly troops, the Second Battalion's mortars fired on elements of the Third. Enemy artillery answered the mortar fire and for a short time the Battalion was pinned down. Contact with the Second was made, eventually, and the dangerous situation was relieved.

The First and Second Battalions, together with the corresponding battalions of the 18th Infantry, attacked Oran immediately after arrival of the Third. However, the city capitulated before it was necessary to call the Third up from regimental reserve.

In two days the 16th had successfully completed its initial operations.

CHAPTER VI

With Oran in American hands, the 16th's duties for the next several weeks were mainly occupational. The Second Battalion moved into Oran to police the city. The Battalion Commander became town major and American law and order were introduced to the native and French inhabitants.

The First Battalion set up around the Tarafouri Airport protecting it from any possible sabotage or other hostile action. One company was kept at La Senia.

The Third Battalion was in the vicnity of Fleurus on the road to Arzew. These two battalions spent considerable time in training.

In the middle of December there was a switch by all the battalions. The Third relieved the Second in Oran, the Second took over the work of the First at the airport and the First moved into the Third's old area around Fleurus.

At the end of the first week in January the regiment was relieved by a regiment of the 34th Division and the 16th was off to renew its campaigning.

Ten days were spent in the vicnity of Montaque de Lions in Algeria, after which a 30 mile truck movement took the regiment to an entraining point at St. Barge de Tlate, Algeria. From there a 300 mile jump took the 16th to Guelma. Arriving on January 21-23, a motor movement brought the regiment to a bivouac area in the vicinity of this town.

After a one night stay, a move was made by the First Battalion to the Ousseltia Valley to join Combat Command B of the 1st Armored Division. This combination, elements of the 26th Infantry and some French units were under tactical command of the 19th French Corps.

At about this time German forces overran French units to the north and when the French withdrew, the Germans menaced the Ousseltia and Siliana Valleys.

The Second Battalion followed the First 48 hours later and was ordered to the vicinity of Maktar. While this battalion was enroute, orders were changed and the regiment, less the Third Battalion, was

Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

ordered to concentrate in the vicinity of Siliana. The two battalions, in combination with British units concentrated in the Ousseltia Valley and reconnoitered for positions from which to counterattack the Germans who were attacking down the Siliana Valley from Pont du Fahs.

Another order change found the Second Battalion being attached to a British Brigade of Infantry which was short one of its own battalions. However, by the 1st of February, the attack was forgotten and the Second Battalion was attached to a British Brigade of the 18th Infantry Division which with elements of the 6th British Armored Division was in position in the vicinity of Robaa.

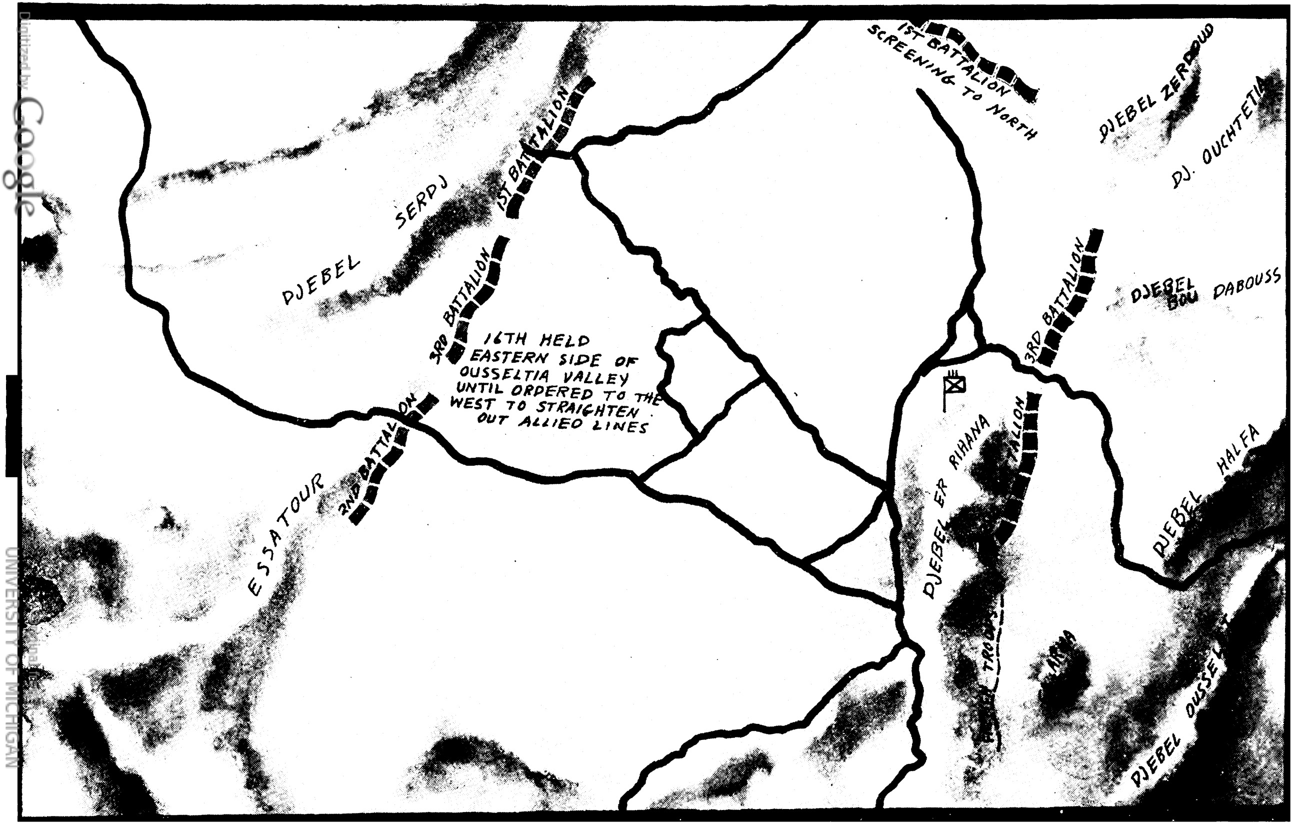
A foot-weary MP boards a horse to perform his duties in an arid, hilly area in North Africa.

The remainder of the regiment, less the Second Battalion, and with the Second Battalion of the 26th Infantry attached, concentrated in the Ousseltia Valley, taking over defensive positions in that area. Their positions were in the neighborhood of Djebel Halfa, Djebel Bou Dabouss, and Djebel Ousselet, the three djebels or mountains constituting a range on the east side of the Ousseltia Valley.

On February 5th, the Third Battalion's "I" and "K" Companies patrolled towards Djebel Bou Dabouss. They reported the approaches to the mountain heavily guarded and outposted with automatic weapons. Four days later another "K" Company patrol made contact with the enemy and eliminated a few machine gun and mortar positions.

About the 19th of February another move was made, this one to the west. All Allied positions from Pichon, north, were evacuated and new positions were taken in the vicinity of Djebel Serdj on the west side of the Ousseltia Valley.

Numerous patrol clashes occurred in this vicinity and the road across the valley was the scene of morning, noon and night attacks by German aircraft. A few jeeps and their occupants became victims of these consistent attacks. During the regiment's stay here, Col. Davis and Major Levin, Commanding Officer and S-3, respectively, of the 7th Field Artillery Battalion were killed when their jeep hit a mine.


1ST BATTALION
SCREENING TO NORTH
DJEBEL ZERDOUD
DJ. OUCHTETIA
DJEBEL BOU DABOUSS
3RD BATTALION
DJEBEL SERDJ
1ST BATTALION
3RD BATTALION
16TH HELD EASTERN SIDE OF OUSSELTIA VALLEY UNTIL ORDERED TO THE WEST TO STRAIGHTEN OUT ALLIED LINES
2ND BATTALION
ESSATOUR
DJEBEL ER RIHANA
TALION
TROOPS
DJEBEL HALFA
DJEBEL OUSSEL

Meanwhile, the Second Battalion remained with the British for another 8 or 10 days during which "G" Company made an attack on an important hill feature two miles in advance of the occupied positions. Its purpose was to secure outposts and obtain better OP's for artillery observers.

The hill was taken successfully, but before the company had a chance to reorganize a heavy counterattack by a regiment of enemy mountain infantry hit back at "G" and the Royal West Kent Regiment which was on the Second Battalion's right.

At the same time, a strong infantry attack supported by tanks hit the British Buffs who were defending the Siliana Valley, on the Robaa Pont du Fah Road.

This attack was disastrous for "G" Company. Some 80 men were evacuated through the Battalion Aid Station. This does not include a considerable number listed as "KIA" and "MIA." The company was withdrawn from the recently taken positions under the covering fire of the 12th British Royal Horse Artillery 25 pounders.

When the withdrawal was completed, "G" had only two officers and forty men remaining. Capt. Carl Steuzel was killed as was Lt. Pierce. Other officer casualties of the attack included Lts. Johnson and Nimmo of "H" Company, both of whom were severely wounded.

It was during this action that the first Mark VI tanks were encountered and destroyed by Allied forces. In the Buffs' sector, gunners of the attached British 6-pounder Anti-tank Battery knocked out three with flanking shots as they were attacking an adjacent battalion of the Buffs.

The remaining time spent here by the Second Battalion was comparatively quiet. The attached unit of French native Goumiers patrolled frequently deep into enemy territory.

This was a peculiar situation in that here was an American Battalion under a British Brigade which, in turn, was under a French Corps. The time spent in this attachment was well worthwile since it gave the American troops an opportunity to better appreciate the fine fighting qualities of the British soldier developed through long campaigning in two or three hard years of war before our invasion of Africa.

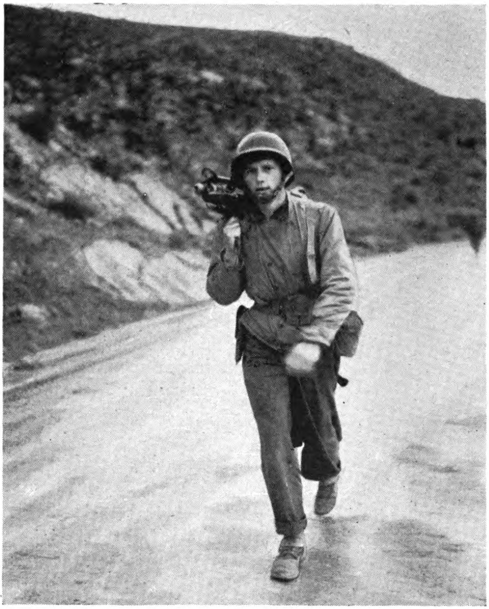
It was with much regret that the battalion ended its British affiliation when it was relieved by a battalion of French Tirailleurs Tunisiens. The Second went into a reserve position in an assembly area in the vicinity of Kezra, west of Serdj.

At about this time the First Division assumed command of all troops, American, British and French, operating in the Ousseltia Valley.

During all of the preceding time, the First Battalion had been in the vicinity of the Roman ruins in the north central part of the Ousseltia Valley. On the left of the Third Battalion, their mission was to block to the north. They were outposting a wide gap between the valley and the

Royal West Kents, defending the Siliana Valley. Their positions at this time varied from direct contact with the Royal West Kents at El Glib to a point some 10,000 yards to the south.

The area covered by the First had been heavily mined by both Americans and Germans during previous alternate occupations of the ground. Numerous casualties were incurred as, from time to time, vehicles ran over mines.



Pfc. John Plichta, Brownsville, Pennsylvania, carrying the tripod of a light machine gun. North Africa.

The evacuation from the eastern to the western side of the valley was the only time in World War II that the 16th Infantry as a whole gave up ground once it had been taken.

After a day in the new positions, the regiment moved on Feburary 20th, to Bou Chebka, in the vicinity of the Kasserine Pass.

Just before this, one battalion of the 26th Infantry, with 19th Engineers attached, and one battalion of the 39th Infantry were heavily attacked at Kasserine Pass by Rommel's forces. This attack had been made possible by a German breakthrough at Faid which had gained such momentum that Feriana, Gafsa and Sbeitla had been overrun. The Second Battalion was attached immediately to Combat Command B of the First American Armored Division.

As soon as possible a reconnaissance was made to contact the 26th Infantry and also down the Bou Chebka-Tebessa-Gafsa Road to contact a Ranger Battalion which was defending in that direction.

The Second Battalion had arrived at its rendezvous point for the CCB meeting at about 1700 in the afternoon. At approximately 0100 the next morning, CCB took up positions east of Djebel El Hamra, in the Kasserine Valley bowl, protecting the pass on the Kasserine-Tebessa Road. The Second Battalion was then ordered to positions in the vicinity of Oulad Mahfoud to cover certain passes leading into the Kasserine Valley bowl.

Additional artillery battalions, of which the 33rd Field Artillery was one, were sent in to aid the combat command. The Second was given the additional mission of protecting these battalions which had positions at the foot of the pass leading into the valley. These artillery positions were actually in the valley itself.

Two mornings later, in heavy fog, as the 7th Field Artillery was going into position with the 33rd, through Oulad Mahfoud Pass, a fierce German attack came out of the fog.

"G" Company with elements of the 6th Armored Infantry Regiment were protecting the batteries at this time. Suddenly the all-out German attack hit the defensive positions and the Germans pressed forward to hit CCB and its attachments in the northwestern portion of the bowl.

The First Battalion moved immediately to the northern pass on the Kasserine-Tebessa Road to protect against a further breakthrough. One battery of the 33rd Field had been overrun by this time. The 7th Field was having a terrible time attempting to achieve some kind of order out of the chaos that had resulted when the attack came while they were still moving.

Reacting admirably, the battalion reversed its transportation, got its guns on high ground and, as the fog lifted at 0900, this battalion, with additional artillery support and the combined forces under CCB, piled into the enemy. Once the fog no longer protected the Germans, the American advantage in position counted heavily. Terrible casualties were inflicted on the attackers and a slaughter ensued. The German forces lost very heavily and their casualties increased as the day advanced.

The Third Battalion counterattacked in the area where the enemy had overrun the 33rd Field Artillery's battery and by evening all positions were restored.

Before dusk, a battalion of American tanks counterattacked into the valley and the Germans were completely routed.

Following this dispersal of the enemy, plans were made immediately for the 16th to attack down the Kasserine-Tebessa Road to take the high ground in the vicinity of Kasserine Pass. The Third Battalion was to take the ground in the vicinity of Djebel Ed Djebbas a very high

Mr. John J. McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War, examining a "bazooka" with Lt. Hangsterfer, Capt. Angelo, and Capt. Margolis. North Africa.

terrain feature 3000 yards south of the pass which had been occupied by an engineer unit prior to the earlier American defeat at this point.

The British Grenadier Guards supported by tanks from the 6th British Armored Division was to take the mountainous ground northeast of the Thala-Kasserine Road, which had been the territory lost by the First Battalion of the 26th and the Third Battalion of the 39th Infantry.

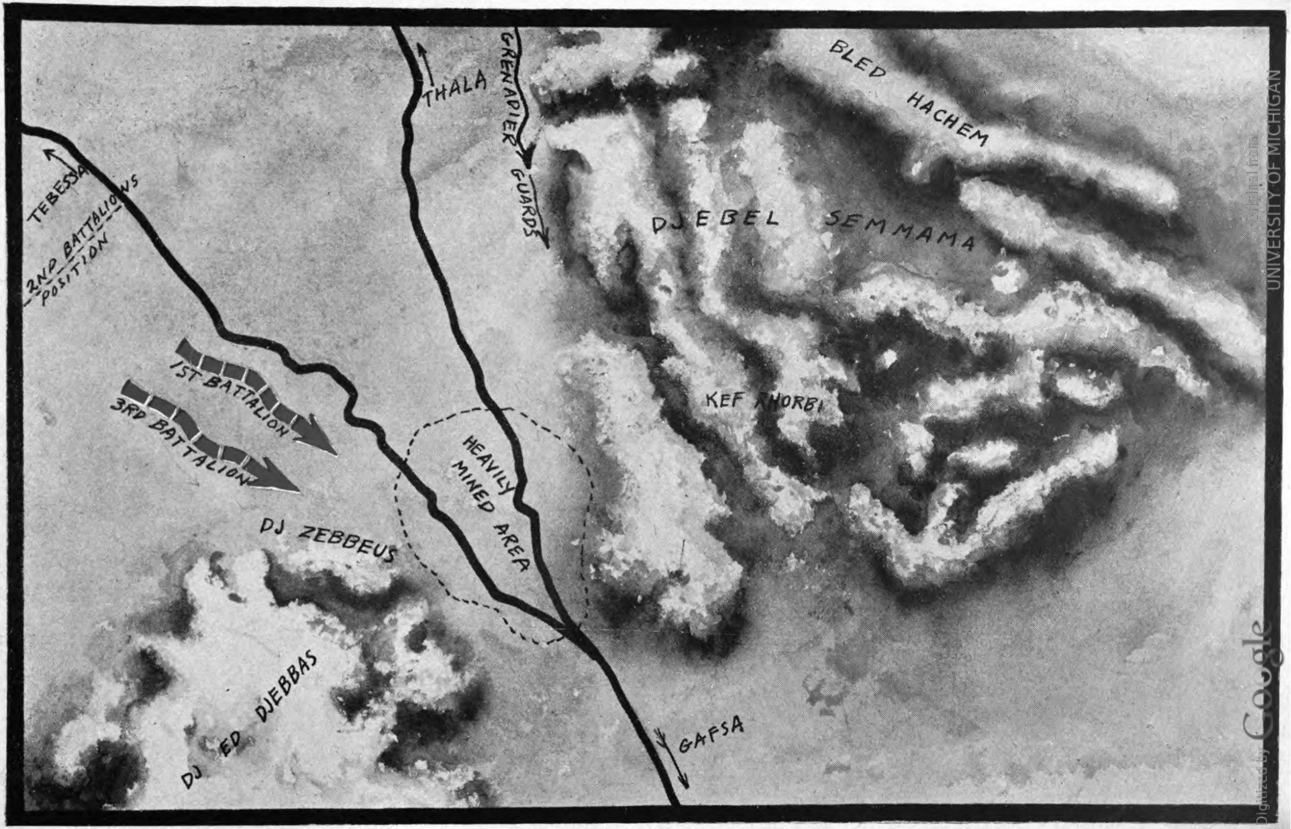
The Second Battalion remained in reserve in a valley about 2000 yards back of the line of departure.

The attack jumped off and met little or no resistance. All objectives were secured and the Second Battalion was ordered to move to the north of the pass and relieve the battalion of the Grenadier Guards.

The enemy had withdrawn, partially because of the losses incurred when their attack was defeated a day or two earlier by the 16th and CCB of the First Armored; partially because of losses suffered in a terrific battle in which a major spearhead of Rommel's forces suffered heavily; and partially because ever since the break-through at the Kasserine Pass the American 12th Air Force had been trimming down the German spearheads with hundreds of strafing and bombing attacks.

In the battle against the major spearhead, knocked-out tanks on the battle field totalled forty for the Germans, 20 British and 10 American.

This engagement — the one which recovered the Pass — cost very little in casualties, resistance having been so slight that few men fell.


TEBESSA
2ND BATTALIONS POSITION
THALA
GRENADIER GUARDS
BLED HACHEM
DJEBEL SEMMAMA
1ST BATTALION
3RD BATTALION
KEF RHORBI
HEAVILY MINED AREA
DJ ZEBBEUS
DJ ED DJEBBAS
GAFSA

Kassering Pass

Within another three or four days, the 60th Infantry of the 9th Division relieved the First Division of the mission of holding the pass. The pass had ben mined by the British, by the French, by the Germans and by the Americans at one time or another. The result was that so many mines remained unrecovered that frequent casualties were suffered by both the British and Americans in the area.

In early March the First Division moved into an aseembly area for rest and replacement of battle casualties. These replacements came from the Third Division, who had been in an occupational role in Morocco. (At a later date, the First repaid the Third when the latter division suffered heavily.)

After a week's rest, during which the replacements were oriented, the First Division moved first to El Meredj from which, on March 12th, another move was made to Bou Chebka.

The Americans were going to attack for the first time with a completely American organization. It was going to be the mission of the First Division and the II Corps under its new commander, Lt. Gen. Patton to seize Gafsa and the high ground near El Guettar and to press forward to gain contact with the British Eighth Army which was making a concerted attack through the Mareth Line in the vicinity of Medenine around the Gulf of Gabes.

After being in an assembly area for three days the 16th moved to a previously reconnoitered assembly area north of Gafsa. A coordinated attack by the division followed. The 16th was in the center with the First Ranger Battalion on the left and the 26th Infantry on the right. Attacking towards Gafsa, on March 16th, the 16th Infantry's line of advance was due south on the Gafsa-Tebessa Road. Attacking with two battalions abreast — the Third on the left, First on the right and Second in reserve, Gafsa, a former American outpost, was seized with little trouble. With elements of "I" Company first into the town, positions were immediately taken up on the northeast side of town astride the Gafsa-Maknassy road.

While waiting there, the 18th and 26th were pushing past El Guettar While here, the Germans hit with a large scale counterattack. The morning of the attack, the regiment was in the Oasis, in division reserve. The Third Battalion was astride the El Guettar-Gabes Road, with "I" on the right, "K" and "L" on the left some 4 miles south of El Guettar. The companies were situated on the high ground overlooking Guettaria Valley.

The enemy attacked with such force that the German 10th Panzer Division broke through into the valley. When the attack developed the 16th's Second Battalion was ordered to the north of the road, left of the Third Battalion to cover the gap between the Third and the Third Battalion of the 18th.

The Second Battalion, at noon, was ordered to counterattack and reseize the guns of the 32nd FA Battalion, which had been overrun by the Germans in positions in front of the high ground on the north edge of the valley.

At about 1700 in the afternoon, an intercept of a German radio message informed the Americans that the Germans were to make an all-out attack with heavy air support. The attack developed but, fighting superbly, the 16th and 18th with fine artillery support, beat it back.

When morning came, it was found that the German forces had withdrawn during the night through the pass north of Djebel El Kreroua.

Reorganizing at once, and with the Second Battalion relieving the Third of the 18th, the 16th was given a sector north of the Gafsa-Gabes Road. Two days later an all-out attack started which carried through the pass north of Djebel El Kreroua over djebel after djebel until the last high ground overlooking the Gabes Plain had been taken. During this action, the 16th was hampered by lack of proper maps. For example, the smallest scale map available was 1:100,000. Many times units reported themselves on certain terrain features when they were nowhere near them. This was a confusion not due to lack of ability but to lack of the proper tools.

The attack had started with two companies acting as a screening force, "A" and "L" Companies, under Major Charles Denholm, pushing to seize a line of departure. The plan called for the regiment to attack in a column of battalions with the First leading and the Third and Second following in that order.

"A" and "L" Companies had difficulty securing their line of departure and the whole First Battalion had to be committed to secure the first objective, 1½ miles west of Djebel el Mcheltat. Both sides were suffering heavy casualties. The Third Battalion was committed on the night of the 1st and the attack continued. Little progress was made during the day. The Second Battalion was committed in a night attack against prepared positions, well wired-in and supported by numerous batteries of German and Italian artillery. This night assault was successful with few casualties. However, before ammunition could be re-supplied a counterattack supported by Italian tanks forced the Battalion's withdrawal, despite the fact that two tanks were knocked out.

After the counterattack it was found that Capt. Maynard W. Files, Lt. Bonomi and nearly an entire platoon from "E" company were missing. It was later learned that they had been captured. Other casualties increased the severe losses in this action.

The following day, the First and Third Battalions again attacked and secured the objective from which the Second had been driven.

A day later, the Second attacked through the First and pressed on with the Third. The Third made little progress. "F" Company in the Second Battalion was badly mauled when it was caught on the open plain in daylight by heavy infantry, mortar and artillery fire. During the encounter, Col. d'Alary Fechet was severely wounded as were S-2, Capt. Brosokas, and "F" Company's Capt. Heil. Some fifty other casualties were evacuated from "F" Company alone.

The next day the regiment found itself disorganized with all three battalions huddled closely together in a wadi under the nose of the mountain, Djebel el Mcheltat. This was where the second line of enemy defenses had been. Up to this point it had been a slow costly battle.

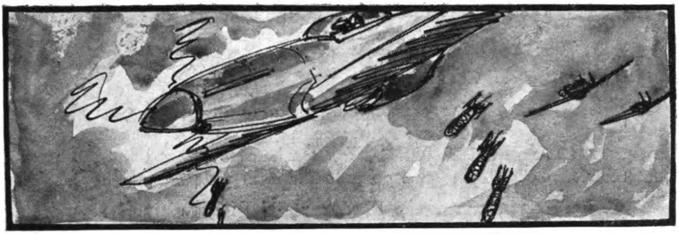
Task Force Benson of the First Armored Division attacked along the axis of the road in the valley in an attempt to relieve some of the pressure on the hard-pressed infantry of the First and Ninth Divisions. The Task Force achieved little. Evening found them barely abreast of the First Division. In the meantime, on the right, two combat teams of the Ninth Division, the 39th and 47th had been having rough going attempting to take Djebel Berda.

One morning later, the First Battalion, under Major Denholm (Lt. Col. Cunningham had been wounded on the first morning of the attack) struck out for Djebel Mcheltat with the 26th Infantry on the left. Evening found the First, Second and Third Battalions echeloned to the right rear with the right flank resting near the floor of Guettaria Valley. The left was on the djebel, which had been taken by the 26th.

Two more days advance toward Djebel Chemsi ensued. Suddenly, from a condition of extreme resistance, the situation changed to one where there was little or no fight left in the defending forces. This startling change was explained when news came that Gabes had been taken and the British Eighth Army was pursuing the enemy towards Sfax and Sousse.

Two more days and on April 4th the 16th was back at the Oasis of El Guettar after which there followed six days of policing the battlefield, resting and bathing in the old Roman baths at Gafsa.

On April 13th, the regiment moved to the Morsott assembly area for more rest prior to movement with the II Corps to the north flank of the British First Army for the final attack towards Tunis.



CHAPTER VII

By the third week in April, Allied forces were preparing for the final move in Africa. The elite troops of Rommel's "Afrika Korps" were on their last legs, though still resisting fiercely. Now, however, they were no longer hoping to drive the Americans and British out of North Africa. Their last ditch stand was designed primarily to maintain an escape route through which this valuable German fighting unit could retreat across the Mediterranean with sufficient strength to fight another day. The show down was to come along the coast between Bizerte and Tunis.

Our armies were prepared to force that showdown as soon as possible. Victorious in every engagement for the preceding several weeks, conquerors of Italy's crack units, the San Marcos Marines the well-trained Austrian Alpine troops, and the heretofore undefeated 10th and 15th Panzer Divisions, the 16th Infantry was ready for this final servies of engagements.

On the 20th of April, the regiment moved a hundred miles, leaving Algeria and camping in the vicinity of Beja, in Tunisia.

This was a part of General Eisenhower's master stroke: the secret withdrawal of the 2nd U. S. Corps to the North during the "Afrika Korps" retreat up the coast of Tunisia. The shift was a gamble which enabled him to concentrate his forces in the north for the final drive.

The hills before Mateur had to be captured, for when Mateur fell, the road to Tunis and Bizerte would be opened.

Pocketed in the northeast corner of Tunisia, the enemy converted outlying hills into grim bastions bristling with artillery, mortars and machine gun nests able to rake every approach with enfilading fire.

The enemy was ordered to defend these hills to the death.

The 16th Infantry Regiment was ordered to advance.

* * *

In the early hours of the Beja-Mateur series of actions, the 16th's major effort was directed toward making contact with the enemy. On their left, the 16th was having some difficulty on Hill 576, but by daylight had moved up on line with the 16th whose First and Second Battalions had been leapfrogging companies until "K" Company reached the vicinity of Hill 394 where the first real opposition developed.

Having reached this area, greater difficulties were bound to be encountered, for immediately ahead lay the most heavily fortified German positions on the road to Mateur. Not only did the enemy hold the higher ground but he held it with an abundance of automatic weapons and covering mortars and artillery.

The Second Battalion meeting and weathering a minor counterattack during the morning, pushed its forward elements out two or three djebels (hills) to the northeast. Meanwhile, the Third was being held up by stubborn resistance from 394. On their right, the 18th was having hard sledding. One counterattack cost that regiment half a battalion.

In the midst of this, in mid-afternoon, came the flash news that General McNair, Chief of Army Ground Forces, had been hit. The general, on a tour of the African front, had been in the sector occupied by the 16th's Second Battalion. He had been near the front when German artillery had come in.

The general, in his own words, was "at the Battalion Aid Station in ten minutes."

The 16th continued to dispute the rugged Tunisian djebels with the Germans the remainder of the afternoon and evening. Hill 394 remained the Third Battalion's stumbling block. Heavy fire from its crest cost several casualties. With the situation still materially unchanged at 2300 hours, Colonel Taylor's order went out to all units . . . "There will be a general attack all along the line at 0300. Take advantage of darkness. Watch flank to the east."

By 0645, Blue Battalion, the Third, had taken 394 and continued to advance. This move caused three companies of the enemy, outflanked, to withdraw to the northeast. Heavy shelling began to make 394 almost untenable. All officers in "K" Company were wounded or killed. First Sergeant Godwin, later commissioned in the field, took over command of the company.

On the left portion of the regimental front, the going was hard. Hill 469 had resisted all day on the 23rd and continued to hold out on the 24th. Combined efforts of "B" and "I" Companies showed some progress, but by midafternoon, the enemy still held out along its crest.

The quality of resistance can be judged from the fact that most of the prisoners taken were wearing Russian campaign ribbons. There was no doubt that the enemy was using the best troops he had.

However, by late afternoon, Maj. Charles J. Denholm's First Battal-

These three days of drenching rain slowed up operations not only in this sector but all along the Normandy front. The American sector, bogged down by heavy rain and thick mud, remained generally static. It was reported that the enemy, removed from the pressure of American attacks, were beginning a "scorched earth" policy, breaking up agricultural machinery to use as barriers.

On July 25th, the weather cleared up. Ten prisoners taken in the morning reported they were from a Marsch Battalion which had arrived the day before. They were ordered to attack the afternoon before, they said, but they refused. "We wanted nothing to do with this goddam war," the prisoners stated.

At 0945 the first formation of bombers to go over the lines west of St. Lo shook the entire sector with their bombs. 500 Normandy based P-47's followed by 1500 bombers, escorted by 500 fighters and 500 light and medium bombers participated in the massive aerial assault. Not a single enemy interceptor rose to engage the 8th and 9th Air Force armada, as they dropped thousands of fragmentation bombs on machine gun nests, pillboxes, gun emplacements and troop concentrations to pave the way for the American drive.

Because the weather hadn't improved, the attack was postponed again. Lt. Ramirez, liaison officer with the Ninth Division, brought back news that the morning's aerial assault shook up the Ninth, Fourth and Thirtieth Divisions and had also caused casualties among other elements of the First.

A 902nd Panzer Grenadier captured that night reported the demoralizing effect of the bombing. He said the only way to get out of it was to run toward our lines. He also reported the line only lightly held, adding that once the Americans broke through the shell there would be nothing to stop them. Their morale was low, he said, but their spirit was not yet broken.

Other information indicated that the basis of German defense was dug-in tanks. Because enemy artillery was still reported in considerable strength, 16th personnel was cautioned to dig-in in the assembly area.

On the morning of the 26th, between 1900 and 2000 heavy and medium bombers of the 8th Air Force once again bombed the enemy held high ground to further soften him before the ground troops advanced.

However, because of the steady rain, Colonel Gibb again called off the attack with the statement, "Rain. No Game. Double header tomorrow."

The 18th CT pushed off that day and by noon were progressing slowly southwards towards Marigny. In the middle of the afternoon, they reported very heavy mortar and artillery fire on them as they approached their first phase line. Most of their trouble appeared to be coming from one particular grid square on which they called for an air mission. An interesting note was added when they reported the area over which they were progressing completely chewed up by the terrible bombings of the 25th and 26th. There were craters everywhere and roads were so badly damaged as to be completely impassable.

At 2230, that evening, the following conversation occurred between G-3 of Division and S-6 (Col. Gibb)

G-3: You are to move out with no further orders, by daylight. Route "A". Our MP's will be on duty.

S-6: I can't start much before 0630 hours because I want to make a "recon" first.

G-3: I want an estimate from you on the time needed between detrucking and the jump-off.

S-6: Can't do that. I will have to see what the conditions are, first.

On July 27, at 0735 hours, the Third Battalion started from its assembly area north of le Mesnil-Angot. A slight change was made in its route and it proceeded westward to Tribehou then turned south on the road which led to Marigny, about ten miles away. The battalion had been informed that remnants of the 13th and 14th Parachute Regiments with SP guns and tanks were expected along the St. Lo-Marigny road, and would probably swing northeast of Marigny to cut off the 16th's advance before they could reach that town through which elements of the 18th had already been reported to have advanced.

The enemy was shelling the road from Tribehou to Marigny. G-3 ordered only the Third Battalion and tanks to push off at the beginning, leaving the remainder of the combat team in the assembly areas to await further orders.

Chaplain C. C. Underwood, a friend of hundreds of men in the 16th.

By 1100, the battalion was only 2000 yards north of Marigny.

Riding tanks and TD's from this point, the force branched off the main road onto a dirt road to bypass Marigny to the west. Just west of the town an enemy counterattack hit the head of the column. One Mark IV tank and an anti-tank gun took a toll of one tank and wounded several men in "I" Company. At 1930 hours, "I" Company was forced to dismount from its tanks because of the heavy machine gun fire coming in from the flank. An hour later 100 troops, one Mark IV and another anti-tank gun counterattacked. As this attack came along the approach march route, which was supposed to have been cleared by the 18th, Regiment requested of Division that the 18th send a company to take care of the enemy.

Two platoons from "I" Company, led by Capt. Richmond dropped off to deal with this force, while the remainder of the column continued on its way, swinging west as it reached the Marigny-Coutances road.

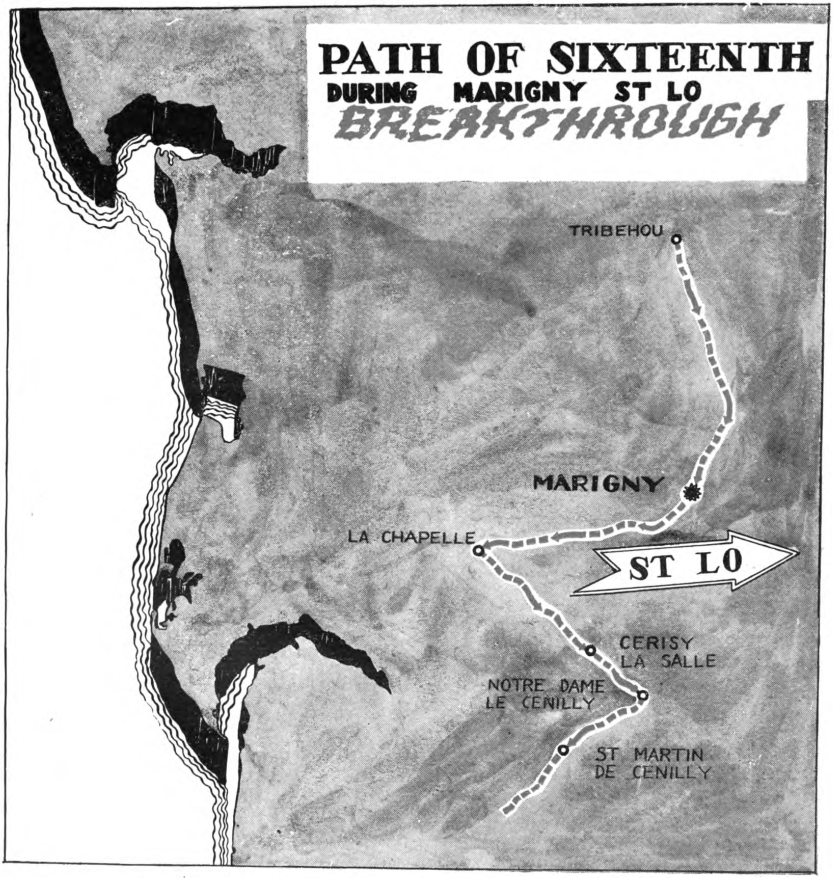
At 2151 hours, the First Battalion was given the green light and moved out on the attack. The Second Battalion continued to wait for orders.

While the BBC radio announced the death of Gen. Leslie McNair, killed in the St. Lo area, the day before, intense shelling of American troops in the vicinity of Marigny continued. Out in front, the armored column screening the Third Battalion encountered enemy burp guns.

At 2213 hours, the Second Battalion moved into the attack. All three battalions were now on the road. Since it was narrow, it was jammed with vehicles and personnel. Enemy artillery continued to fall to the west and southwest, but consistently missed the road. Several times the near vicinity of a crossroads would come under fire, but never the road itself.

Only scattered resistance met the 16th during this part of the night. Earlier in the evening, at 1830, a minor tank engagement took place near La Chapelle, but the accompanying tank force of the 16th, CCB of the Third Armored Division experienced no major tank battle. This was not, however, to be taken as an indication that the Germans had no armor. During the afternoon, 100 enemy tanks had been seen between La Chapelle and Coutances. Late in the afternoon they had been heavily attacked by the Air Force.

By this time it was apparent to Col. Gibb that the enemy might attempt to withdraw the maximum number of troops possible from the pocket area north of Coutances, down through that town and also infiltration might be tried through American-held portions of the road. The enemy might, also, attempt to hold open the Coutances escape route by throwing all available forces against the 16th's westward penetration, supported by the remaining tank units from the Second SS. There was,


PATH OF SIXTEENTH
DURING MARIGNY ST LO
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LA SALLE
NOTRE DAME
LE CENILLY
ST MARTIN
DE CENILLY

in addition, the chance that German plans might include a night attack with the objective of retaking Marigny, thereby keeping open the escape route through the Coutance-Marigny line.

All indications, however, pointed to a complete state of disorganization among the partially encircled troops. It was quite evident that there was a definite lack of communications and a very poor knowledge of the American situation.

The 16th's operations were not going with complete smoothness and dispatch. Early in the morning of the 28th, Col. Gibb reported, "Situation confused. Traffic rotten. Movement to La Chappelle impossible at this time. Tanks double-banked on road. Receiving enemy artillery fire. Request notification of CCB intentions. Enemy confused, but present! Casualties Company "I", 7, Company "L", 1."

At 0814 hours, leading elements of the First Battalion were held up by enemy anti-tank fire about 1200 yards northwest of La Chappelle. One tank was lost. The First Battalion maneuvered to get the enemy gun as the Third continued to push slowly forward. Division inquired of Col. Gibb if he needed the assistance of the 26th Infantry. He replied that he did not.

"L" Company was stopped by machine gun fire, the source of which was quickly eliminated. At this point, the supposed anti-tank gun which had been holding up the First Battalion turned into a tank. In a short sharp engagement, it knocked out two American light tanks. Enemy anti-aircraft brought down an American plane only a short distance from the battalion's positions.

When the attack had jumped off at 0600 there had been no resistance — no firing. Yet, within a few hours, the enemy had suddenly appeared in various places with sufficient force in isolated pockets to delay the advance of the entire combat team, to inflict casualties, knock out three tanks, and bring down a plane.

Congestion was adding to the effect of enemy pockets to slow down the advance. Col. Gibb informed the First and Third Battalions he wanted them to increase their speed in order to prevent piling up on the roads.

At 1000 hours, S-3 reported to Division G-2 that "resistance appears to be folding." Yet, by the end of that day, the 16th had run into the bitterest resistance and suffered the most casualties since D-Day.

Because the First Battalion was forced to move so slowly, the Second was committed on their left. The First, using light tanks to knock out machine gun nests, pushed companies "A" and "B" forward only to have them held up by more strong points. The delay prevented the Third Battalion's advance since the two units had to push forward together. Since the armor could go almost anywhere (the greatest threat at this time was small arms fire to which the tanks and TD's were immune) Col. Gibb withdrew the tanks as a screening force and ordered CCB to push on to Coutances. By this time the enemy had decided to use 150 mm guns and these weapons joined the mortars and machine guns to slow the 16th's advance. The enemy was cleverly organized in hedgerows, where groups of 15—20 expertly camouflaged, fought fanatically to hold up the infantry.

Advancing along the road from Marigny toward Coutances, with intense enemy resistance in the area surrounding La Chapelle, CT 16 had to contend with rain, mud and enemy artillery, in addition to these pockets of German foot troops. The high hills around La Chapelle and to its rear were full of mortars and artillery. Despite these weapons and the fury with which they were used, the three battalions pushed forward very slowly, with the Third Battalion taking the worst beating of the three.

Traffic jams also slowed up operations considerably. CT 16 passed hundreds of wrecked and abandoned vehicles and other equipment cluttering the road. Enemy dead were everywhere.

Repeating the successful tactics used by the Germans and Russians in armored breakthroughs, followed by infantry, the Third Battalion was held up one field away from La Groudiere west of La Chapelle. Tanks and artillery were then brought to bear at this point with effective results, after which the foot troops moved up to clean out the remaining resistance.

Preceding CT 16 due west, speeding tank columns were aided by 9th Air Force fighter-bombers, acting as escorts in relays, and strafing enemy armor as they went.

By 1440 hours, after the First Battalion had had another furious encounter with enemy tanks and infantry and the Third had come under another intense artillery barrage, CT 16 had lost 2 medium tanks, 2 light tanks and had had more than 100 casualties.

A couple of thousand yards north and west of La Chapelle, the Third Battalion was confronted with more machine gun, mortar and artillery fire. At that time an intercepted message sent by one German unit to another, revealed that our tanks were in their rear. This prompted the Third to attack in the face of a heavy concentration of fire.

At the same time, the First Battalion which had been well to the left rear of the Third, swept its "C" Company down toward La Groudiere under cover of fire from 105's which destroyed enemy anti-tank guns and permitted the company to enter the village's buildings and close the gap between the two battalions. The battalion suffered severe casualties in this maneuver but the result seemed to justify the cost.

At about the same time, the Third Battalion, losing 5 medium tanks and 1 TD, was compelled to pull the armor back a thousand yards to an assembly area and leave it there. They had received intense fire from the slope of a hill east of Courcy, which lay southwest of the 16th's forward elements.

In the vicinity of the road, and to the south of the Third Battalion the First encountered more strong resistance from enemy tanks and perhaps as many as 240 concealed infantrymen. The enemy controlled all favorable terrain and the battalion had to push up the road in view of the Germans. In a fierce engagement with tanks, the First lost 29 wounded and 3 or 4 killed. Although 6 or 7 machine gun units were wiped out, enemy mortars continued to give violent support to their tanks. By 1830 hours, CT 16 had lost 5 medium tanks, 2 lights, one M-10 TD, 10 men killed and 115 wounded.

A half dozen buildings in the vicinity of the tiny village of La Chevalerie had been converted into an enemy strong point with 3 Mark VI tanks and 40-50 dug-in infantry. The First Battalion was too close to permit a fire mission to be used. Therefore, at the request of the 7th Field Artillery, the battalion was requested to pull back in order to permit them to lay fire on the objective while maintaining troop safety. However, Major Driscoll, unwilling to give up the ground so dearly gained, refused to withdraw his companies. It was his plan to stay fairly close to the position and risk the danger of short rounds while the artillery worked over the area.

It was finally found to be necessary to withdraw the forward forces. It was a slow dangerous move since it meant pulling back in the face of the enemy who had good observation on any movement. The situation reached such a precarious point that General Huebner, First Division Commanding General, was prepared to commit the 18th Infantry (division reserve) down CT 16's flank. Col. Gibb assured the general he didn't believe it necessary.

Northwest of La Groudiere the hedgerows were thick with enemy machine guns and mortars. Along the edge of these hedgerows, nose to nose with the enemy, was the Third Battalion.

Lt. Col. Horner could have by-passed these enemy but that, ultimately, would have resulted merely in disengaging the enemy and not pinning, him down, a job which then would have to be taken over by some other unit. When the engagement was joined with the enemy, an enlisted man knocked out two enemy tanks with a bazooka. One enemy self-propelled gun also was destroyed, but the battalion lost 10 tanks, 2 tankdozers and had 3 officers wounded, 7 enlisted men killed and one missing in action. During the course of this part of the operation, only the First and Third Battalions were engaged. The Second was maintained in reserve.

Both battalions in action suffered severely here because the terrain favored the dug-in well-concealed enemy. It had been a hard costly day. The attack had carried only about 2500 yards since early morning. The strongpoint from whose near vicinity Maj. Driscoll had refused to withdraw his forward elements was finally brought under fire by the 7th Field Artillery. However, it was necessary, before eradication was completed, to withdraw the American troops nearest it since they were in too grave danger from the friendly fire. Shortly afterwards, it was again brought under fire not only by the same Field Artillery battalion but a company of 4.2 chemical mortars and the 5th Field Artillery as well.

As night set in the picture was rather gloomy. Division ordered vigorous patrolling with plans to attack again the next day if indications pointed to a weakening or withdrawing enemy. If the Germans remained as potent as during the day just past, CT 16 would not attack, but hold.

Patrols from both the First and Third Battalions encountered machine gun and sniper fire, altho it appeared that only scattered small groups remained in the area. That was the information that was passed on to Division. The strongpoint that had caused the First so much trouble was checked and found to contain only dead enemy and a Mark VI tank and an SP gun destroyed. Only occasional long range artillery caused concern during the remainder of the night.

Capt. Karl E. Wolf, a First Lt. and Executive Officer of "K" Company at the time this photograph was made, later commanded "I" Company, and still later was commanding Officer of the Third Battalion.

The Second Battalion's patrols indicated that the area south of the Coutances-Marigny road was devoid of enemy. The result of that information was an order from Division telling the combat team to wheel to the south in its morning advance, on July 29th. The 16th was to occupy a wide front on the north side of the La Soulle River. All three battalions were to be on line with the Third farthest west, the Second in the middle and the First on the east side of the line. All battalions were ordered to move near the river and to patrol down to it but not to cross it.

Officers and enlisted men alike were heroes on D-Day. This Pvt. receives a DSC from Maj. Gen. Clarence Huebner.

The enemy now left behind in the regimental area was caught in a hasty withdrawal. It was soon ringed in. It was believed that these pockets were thoroughly disorganized and should offer little resistance.

At 0905 hours, The First and Third battalions were on the move. When Gen. Huebner informed Col. Gibb that CT 26 was prepared to move southwest on CT 16's left, in support, the colonel told the general he didn't believe it would be necessary to commit them. For that reason CT 16 was given sole responsibility for the entire division sector north of the La Soulle.

The movement of the three battalions encountered no enemy action, until at 1426 the Second Battalion reported itself under friendly fire which afterwards proved to be German. Near the objective, this battalion also met a little small arms fire, which was quickly eliminated.

To the left rear of the regiment, about 4000 yards, a concentration of 500 more enemy tanks as well as other vehicles was reported. The Air Force was flying many missions against this array of armor, and by late evening were able to report 50 tanks destroyed, 55 probables, 100 other vehicles knocked out and 3 or 4 road junctions shot up.

Throughout the early morning hours, the 16th had only negative reports. At 0948, it was put on a six hour alert. Additional reports of the enemy's continued disorderly withdrawal came in and were confirmed by prisoners taken by the corps on the preceding day.

Enemy forces to the front remained inactive, although reports of intense action, including several counterattacks came in from units several miles to the south and east. One of these by the Second SS Panzer Division resulted in the breakthrough of 12 tanks and 200-300 infantrymen. These, and one other group, were soon pocketed but at the cost of rather heavy casualties. The air force continued active and reported hundreds of vehicles — tanks, SP guns and trucks — destroyed.

Trucks were supplied the 16th and at 1800 hours, orders came for an administrative move through La Chapelle to Cerisy La Salle, Notre Dame Le Cenilly, then to St. Martin de Cenilly. From there, a foot movement would be made to an assembly area north of St. Denis le Gast. There, the commanding officer would receive sealed orders from the division.

At 0118 hours, the Third Battalion was ordered to the IP. Personnel were warned to be on the lookout for enemy stragglers in the assembly area. The First Battalion followed the Third with the Second last in line. Heavy fog slowed progress.

By 0944, the battalions were in their assembly areas north of St. Denis le Gast, awaiting orders. To the south, the Sienne River was being crossed by one of the armored units. Gen. Huebner ordered the 16th to patrol down to the river to see if any crossing, other than the bridge used by the armor, was available.

An indication of the confused state of the Germans at this time was the fact that a German colonel and his Chief of Staff were taken in a house several thousand yards in the rear by the Fifth Field Artillery. For two days they had not known where the lines were.

At noon, reports showed the 18th and 26th CT's already across the Sienne and the British five miles to the south of Caumont. Prisoners admitted that resistance was isolated and that it had become a case of every man for himself.

Col. Gibb decided to use the unimproved road through St. Denis le Gast in the coming move. At 1725 hours, Division informed the 16th that it appeared more likely that the regiment would move in the morning because armor would operate in front of the combat team and it would have to go into a tank harbor for the night, thus holding up any possible night advance the foot troops might expect to make.

However, at 1745, both Corps and Division contacted Col. Gibb with the following order· "Progress with all possible speed to first objective. Air reports nothing in front of us. Forced march, or shuttling, which ever you have to use."

CT 16 began to move. Progress continued without incident until, at Gavray, the march was held up by a bridge which was being repaired. By 2150, units were on the road again and were more than 2000 yards south of Gavray. Shortly afterwards, the column was again held up. Men were notified to bed down, but to be prepared to move on an hour's notice.

At 0015, on August 1st, the enemy air force, long inactive, struck back with a vengeance. A sizeable group hit the regiment's forward CP. Vehicles, jammed along the road, offered an inviting target. For twenty minutes there was the whistle of falling bombs. When short lulls came, men would try to find better cover, only to be hit by the fragments of delayed action anti-personnel bombs. Anti-Tank Company was hardest hit, losing 1 man killed, 1 officer and 16 EM wounded. "I" Company had 2 men killed, 13 wounded and there were as many more wounded from other units of the regiment. Attached organizations suffered heavily, also. 7th Field Artillery had 10 casualties. Its Major Marklis, just one week out of the hospital, was killed.

The following day, the regiment moved southward again. By mid-afternoon, it was at a point about 5000 yards to the south and slightly to the east of Gavray. There, in the vicinity of la Quesniere and le Mesnil-Rouges, it held up, awaiting new orders. These came at 0300 the following morning. It was evident that a broken German army, fleeing southward toward Mortain and heavily attacked from the air in its flight, could soon be entrapped. The First Division was ordered to continue the attack on southeast with CT 18 on the right, CT 26 on the left, and the 16th in reserve. The division advance was to be spearheaded by CCA of the Third Armored Division.

CT 16 would cover the right flank of the division and be prepared to advance to support the 18th or 26th on orders from the commanding general.

On August the 2nd, the regiment moved. Mid-morning, found them across the See River without incident. The uninterrupted move confirmed the supposition that there would be no serious enemy obstruction of the river crossing.

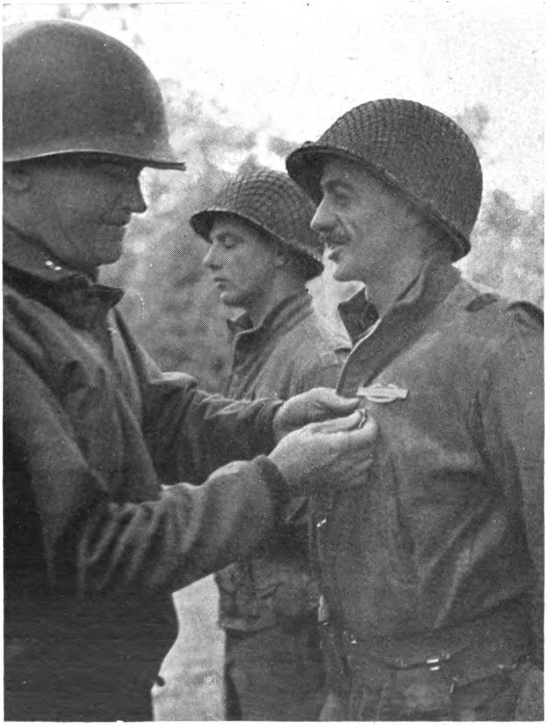
Capt. Kimball Richmond, CO Company "I", later a Major and Executive Officer of the Third Battalion, and Capt. Morehouse, S-1, Third Battalion, at Litton Cheney, England, spring of 1944. Capt. Morehouse was killed in action on D-Day.

Originally scheduled to stop and organize defensively, on Hill 202 to the north of la Chaple Uree, things had gone so well that the Third Battalion was ordered to continue to the town and maintain observation from the high ground around it until relieved.

In position first, on the left, the Third Battalion was ordered to be prepared to engage the enemy if a counterattack then in progress (at 1140 hours) succeeded in breaking through the Third Armored Division's CCB, some 3000—4000 yards to the east. A little artillery fire came in on the battalion shortly afterwards, but it apparently was not coordinated with any concerted enemy effort to stop the advancing Americans.

Because of the difficulty of transporting supplies over the jammed roads leading to the rear, artillery ammunition was drastically rationed at this point. Artillery was to be fired only on observed targets, except in case of extreme emergency. Between 1500 and 1600 hours, the enemy became active in the vicinity of Le Cresnays, some 2000 yards to the east. Enemy tanks were firing. Other engagements between groups of armor, in the same neighborhood, were sufficient to keep the First and Third Battalions continuously on the alert. The only activity during the night was a bombing of the First Battalion and the regimental CP — by American planes — in which one EM was wounded.

On August 3rd, two battalions, the First and Third, were ordered to relieve elements of the 18th. There had been report that the enemy was in Juvigny. Later these reports changed to one which indicated the Germans had left that town. However, the change was made, in the face of considerable difficulty caused by traffic jams.



Lt. Cutler, "L" Company officer receives DSC won on the deadly sands of Omaha Beach.

Pockets of the enemy were reported in the area. Most of them were bent on breaking out of their individual traps and when encountered were reported to be resisting furiously. One strong German patrol infiltrated through the lines of th 18th Infantry and engaged in a sharp fire fight with the MP's around the regimental CP.

The Third Battalion, in order to forestall any other such activity was ordered to patrol both on foot and in vehicles, continuously. The other two battalions were placed to defend the right flank of the division. To insure the CP itself against such an incident as had annoyed the 18th, the I & R platoon was outposted around the CP area Before midnight an enemy burp gun opened up on one of the I & R posts. Other isolated fire from the enemy indicated a small unit either bent on harassing the 16th or escaping from encirclement. Having moved south about 4000 yards and east another 10,000, the Second Battalion was busy cleaning out woods just north of Juvigny le Tertre. Just before midnight, there was machine gun and small arms fire from the vicinity of the town, but it was quickly silenced.

Prisoners picked up in the early morning hours of August 4th indicated that the enemy's arms situation was deplorable.

These men said they were part of a group of 100 who had among all of them only 2 machine guns and some mortars.

An "F" Company patrol, 3000 yards north of Juvigny le Tertre encountered a German outpost which refused to surrender and was wiped out. However, south of Juvigny, another patrol from the same company had one man killed by a combination of mortar and small arms fire. Both these actions occurred after daylight.

The remainder of the morning and the early part of the afternoon found the regiment encountering no more than a scattering of small arms fire. This situation continued until 1350 when a tank appeared and fired several rapid rounds at the First Battalion before being driven off by fire from that unit. The remainder of the day passed with no particularly disturbing incident except the bombing of the same battalion by friendly planes. The Third lost three men and a jeep to tank fire.

Shortly after midnight on August 5th, enemy planes in force bombed south and southwest of the CT 16 area. Within an hour artillery fire fell in the vicinity of the regimental CP and the Second Battalion. Extensive patrolling encountered a scattering of small arms resistance all of which was quickly eliminated. Aside from these details, trivial as compared with some of the fighting in the previous two months, the night was quiet.

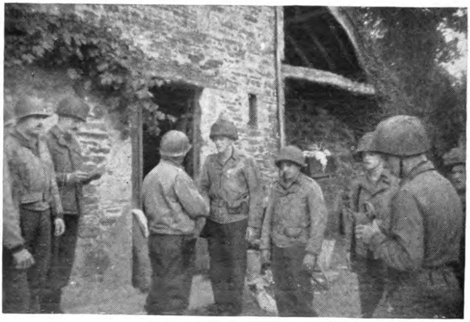
In the morning a 14 mile move was begun to the neighborhood of Buais 8-10 miles south of Mortain. The position was to have been defensive but since the enemy had fled, it became an assembly area.

Following what had become a regular nightly schedule, German planes came over shortly after midnight, August 6th, and bombed near the 16th area.

A proposed move to Mayenne the following morning faced the prospect of some difficulty when it was reported that anti-tank weapons, tanks and infantry were located somewhere along the route to be taken. The I & R platoon, dispatched to check this report, returned with the information that the enemy had departed. The reconnaissance had taken the platoon all the way into Mayenne which had been secured by other American troops.

Aron, to the east of Mayenne had enemy in it. Also in the same area there was a large calibre flat trajectory weapon that shelled the road between Mavenne and Aron. However, the only casualties resulted from shelling by our own 90th Division. Movement had been so fast the past few days that adjacent units sometimes did not know their neighbors were within miles of their actual locations.

"F" Company was attacked later and its TD's lost one half-track in an exchange which cost the enemy a tank. This encounter occurred over three thousand yards to the south of Aron. At about the same time, the French Police reported Germans fleeing to the south out of Aron which would bring them into contact with "F" Company.

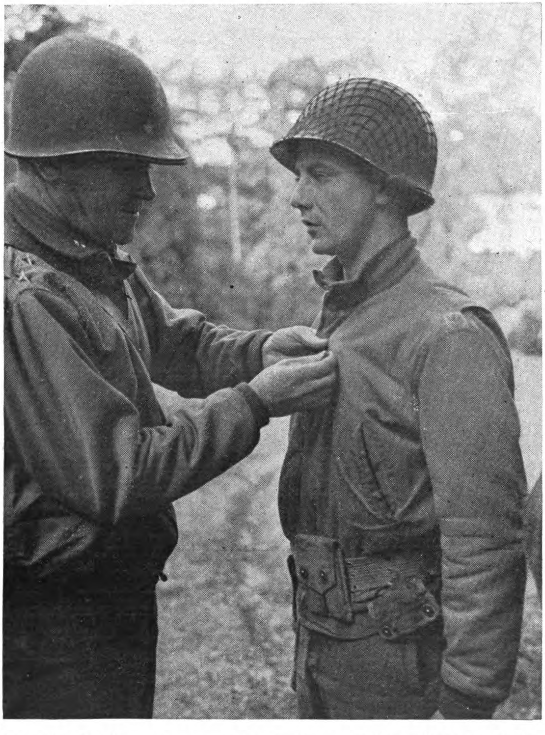


Maj. Sandell, 7th Field Artillery Liaison Officer, and Lt. Col. Horner, Third Battalion Commander observe ceremony as Maj. Gen. Clarence Huebner decorates men of the 16th.

The regiment was deployed for all-round protection that night with special emphasis given to a defensive setup that would stop any attack from an easterly direction — and overhead, This latter matter was taken care of by 16 90 mm anti-aircraft guns which were scattered through the 16th in an effort to do something about the nightly air attacks which, even when they inflicted no casualties were a considerable nuisance anyway.

The night of August 6-7 was anything but quiet. The German troops concentrated in and around Aron made a determined effort to get out of a trap one side of which was held by the 16th. Their objective appeared to be the bridge in Mayenne. 1500 yards north of Mayenne, the Ninth Panzer Division, on the east side of the river pounded the First Battalion, across the river, with all kinds of fire including a great deal of HE artillery. Nebelwerfer fire came into Mayenne, itself. The Third Battalion answerd with mortar fire and egiment called for artillery.

The enemy approached the bridge northeast of Mayenne. Lt. Col. Horner ordered the bridge mined, and the 745th Tank Battalion rushed a force of light tanks into the area.



More trepidation appears on the face of this rifleman at the moment of receiving the DSC than during the trying hours in which it was won on D-Day.

One M-10 TD, protected by a platoon from "B" Company was captured by the enemy at 0100 hours. The tank had a radio and secret documents aboard. Col. Gibb ordered Col. Horner to do his best to recapture it.

The First Battalion received a constant stream of small arms and mortar fire. Facing Aron, it was in the center of a semi-circle formed by the three battalions around Mayenne. In this fire fight, which later brought artillery and direct fire in on the battalion, three TD's were lost and 5 men from "B" Company were killed.

Throughout the early morning hours, before daylight, tanks were moving around in the battalion area. Most of these were assumed to be enemy, although occassionally one, or a group, would be recognized as friendly. In most instances the foot troops were forced to fight armor unassisted. Once when TD's were available, three of them were knocked out and the fourth was forced to withdraw, leaving a platoon to bear the brunt of the enemy's vehicular attack. However, at no time did the Germans effect a breakthrough. When daylight came, a general feeling of relief pervaded the regiment since it was felt that if the enemy had been unable to break out of the trap at night when darkness favored him, any counterattack in daylight could be handled with comparative ease.

While CT 16 surrounded Mayenne, the thrusts of the enemy, from virtually all directions at one time or another during the night indicated that CT 16 might be surrounded by the enemy. New reports came in that the Germans were being reinforced.

However, patrol action during the morning encountered no enemy to the east of the First Battalion which continued to be the center of the regimental line, facing Aron.

Late in the afternoon the First and Third Battalions came under machine gun fire, to which a little later was added heavy concentrations of mortar fire. 10 enlisted men from the First Battalion were killed during the day.

The Second Battalion used volunter Free French young men and boys to filter through enemy lines to check the effect of artillery fire and to bring back information on enemy artillery positions. These natives could enter German lines if they had nothing on their persons to indicate that they had been in contact with American troops. One tragic incident occurred when the affiliations of one of the youngsters was discovered from the fact that he was chewing gum. It cost him his life.

During this period, these French youths were used with notable success by the 16th. Their courageous ferreting out of information regarding enemy strength and movements undoubtedly saved many American lives.

Throughout the morning of the 8th, the 16th continued to probe the enemy's strength around Aron, and always these patrols were met with shell, mortar and small arms fire. In the Second Battalion area, German patrols constantly attempted to penetrate American lines. Most of these were either killed or driven off.

One fact became apparent from our patrols — a large number of machine guns had been concentrated forward of Aron. Whether these were to be used to support a counter-attack or set up to provide delaying action while the main body retreated could not be determined.

Light enemy aircraft activity was more of a nuisance than a danger. During the preceding night, there had been a little bombing which had been ineffective. In the late afternoon five planes strafed the Third Battalion, also without producing casualties.

For the next two days, all units were constantly alert to the threat of the expected counterattack. All signs pointed toward an enemy drive. Yet, the only encounters (aside from the fairly constant exchange of artillery and mortar fire) were patrol actions. In one of these, the I & R Platoon, feeling out the defenses, 5000 yards south of Aron, had one man, Sgt. Leyton, killed by an enemy machine gunner.

The situation continued very nearly the same until August 12th — the 16th patrolled, the enemy shelled and neither side knew a great deal about the plans of the other.

On the 12th it became apparent that the biggest Allied drive since the original landing was in progress. It was developing with such astonishing speed that all the original thousands of Germans who, it had been hoped would be trapped by the St. Lo-Marigny breakthrough, plus a great many more, might be encircled. Armored spearheads had advanced to within 70 miles of Paris. With American forces swinging back to the northeast, and the Canadians continuing to press down from the north, all Germans to the west could be cut off, encircled and chopped to pieces in one large or many small pockets.

CT 16's mission in the new plan was to drive northeast toward La Ferte Mace. Armor had already preceded the planned push, by-passing groups of the enemy which it would be the regiment's responsibility to mop up.

The original objective of the 18th, the high ground around La Sauvagere, northeast of La Ferte Mace, was given to the 16th. The Third Battalion was to drive for this objective, the First was to go after Les Roussiers a few thousand yards north of the Third's objective, and the Second was to be on the right flank, attacking toward the small town of Le Mesnil de Briouze.

The big obstacle in the path of an advance towards La Ferte Mace was the Andaine Forest and the Forest de la Ferte, both parts of the same, large wooded area. Reports had it that these woods were thick with enemy.

Determination, as expressed by the tilt of this soldier's chin won for him a Distinguished Service Cross, and for the 16th Infantry a foothold in Normandy.

When patrols returned from Aron, after a final checkup, and reported all enemy out of that town, the withdrawal of the troops on line around Mayenne began. Late that night the Third Battalion set out. The anticipated difficulty in the Andaine Forest developed into a number of small firefights in each of which the enemy was quickly eliminated. Numerous ammunition dumps were taken on the swift sweep through the woods.

Approaching La Sauvagere, the objective, early on August 14th, the Third Battalion had "I" Company leading, on tanks, "L" following, also on tanks as well as TD's and trucks and "K" company on foot.

"I" Company was given the mission of clearing out the town. Following stubborn resistance, the town was occupied. The brief but bitter fight cost the enemy 2 scout cars, 3 trucks, several dead and a number of prisoners.

"L" Company working northwest, established a roadblock 1200 yards out of La Ferte Mace. Their advance netted a bag of 21 German prisoners, one female collaborator and two enemy killed.

"K" Company pushed out of town to the northeast, engaging in several brisk fire fights in which they knocked out several enemy vehicles and took 4 prisoners. Before the day was over, the Third Battalion had added two perfectly good German tanks to its captured equipment.

Total casualties for the action were three officers and 19 enlisted men wounded. All officers and 17 of the enlisted men were from "I" Company.

The Second Battalion attacked to the north out of La Sauvagere on August 16th. "G" Company was fired on by two tanks and held up for a time until the tanks attached to "E" knocked out one of the enemy vehicles "E" Company, with its armor, attacked and occupied the high ground 1000 yards northwest of La Sauvagere. The little resistance they met was unorganized. Most of the enemy had fled, limiting their prisoner bag to 12. The remainder of the Second Battalion took Le Mesnil de Briouze against little show of resistance.

The First Battalion made the most spectacular attack in this action. Striking at night with amazing swiftness, the battalion took Les Roussieres in a sweeping assault that proceeded with such speed the enemy was unable to withdraw a sizeable portion of his forces. Profits from the quick seizure of the town were 100 prisoners, 13 half-tracks, one mortar, two 75's, 25 to 30 machine guns, and more surprising still, one Mark V tank complete with crew. In addition, "C" Company accounted for 11 half-tracks destroyed by riflemen armed with bazookas.

The next day, the 17th, the Second Battalion ran patrols to contact the British who were driving across the 16th's front. Artillery and mortar fire killed one enlisted man on one of these missions.

By the 18th of August, the British were in Briouze, the enemy was withdrawing from the entire sector and the regiment's mission was finished. The Caan-Falaise gap had been closed, great numbers of enemy captured and a race across France was about to begin.

CHAPTER XIII

With no assignment at the moment, the 16th CT withdrew to La Ferte Mace for a well-earned rest. Rehabilitation and replacement of personnel went on for about a week. At the end of that period of relaxation, the regiment made one of its longest moves of the war, travelling in convoy 150 miles to the neighborhood of Lardy, south of Paris. The big jumps were beginning. Paris, which a few weeks before had seemed so far away, was about to be bypassed by the fast-travelling 16th. Other units were doing the work of taking the city. On this date, scattered resistance was still being put up in the suburbs of the city, but the bulk of the enemy forces had withdrawn from Paris to Corbeil (near the 16th's area) on the 26th and from there to Melun, thence northeast in the general direction of Belgium.

Enemy capabilities were still to be reckoned with. Small units, bypassed by the flying armored columns could be expected to inflict considerable damage in any attempt to eliminate them, although incapable of doing any more than temporarily delaying the general advance.

The VII Corps, parent organization of the First Division was assigned a mission, to begin on the following day, the 27th. The Corps was to attack northeast. The Third Armored Division would spearhead the attack, followed by the First Division on the left, the Ninth on the right.

All combat teams of the First were to be abreast with the 16th holding the flank position on the left, in contact with the V Corps. The regiment was to clear pockets of resistance left by the armor which was to advance as far and as rapidly as possible.

Three task forces were organized within the regiment with the battalions forming the nucleus of each.

By 0813 on the morning of the 27th, Col. Gibb orderd Lt. Col. Horner to move the Third Battalion. Col. Horner reported the battalion unable to move until about 1500 since a bridge across the Seine, on its route, would not be rebuilt until about that time. However, the battalion started to move shortly afterwards. Throughout the morning and early afternoon progress continued uninterrupted. By 1400, the regiment had reached its final objectives for the day.

Friendly civilians continued to pour information of all kinds into the ears of the advancing troops. Most of their talk was concerned with enemy forces which were withdrawing well in advance of the arrival of the Americans. The I & R Platoon, out in front of the regiment could not maintain contact with the fleeing foe.

Early the next morning the movement started again. Demolition of bridges by the enemy was the only deterrent to an uninterrupted advance, although the I & R Platoon finally caught up to a very small element of the routed Germans. In a brief fire fight, one doughboy was wounded.

Nightfall found the combat team a few thousand yard northwest of Meaux.

The next morning, August 29th, a repetition of the previous two days' movement began again. Groups of the Maquis, French guerrillas, begged for arms, gave information, and occasionally proudly exhibited their recent bags of Germans — a few prisoners, many more dead.

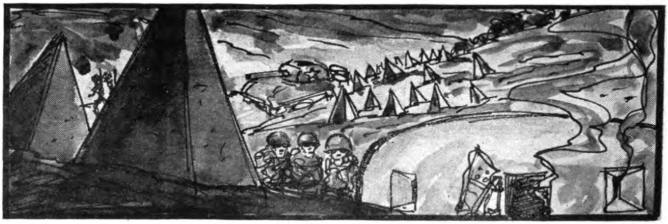
Civilians and reconnaissance reported small groups of enemy and an occasional tank out ahead of the column, and one vicious fight occurred between a Free French contingent and the enemy at a railroad station in a small town on the right flank. However, the 16th continued to proceed unopposed, to its objective, near Acy en Multien.

Plans for the next day called for even more speed. Trucks were to be obtained from a trucking company. The 7th Field Artillery Battalion, accompanying the regiment, was to be so close that it was to haul infantrymen on its vehicles. An unhampered advance was expected. The Second Battalion was ordered to hurry to its objective and send its trucks back for another element as soon as it arrived.

The movement was accomplished without opposition, as intelligence indicated it should have been, and all positions were occupied by 1400. Indeed, "I" Company, leading the Third Battalion was in position shortly after 1100 hours.

This move took the 16th to the vicinity of Soissons, a town where the regiment had fought bittery in the last war. Part of the Regiment, at St. Pierre-Aigle, overlooked a church, which in 1918 had been one of the 16th's CP's. The movement for two or three days past had been generally northerly. This jump moved the combat team well to the northeast of Paris and heading straight for the Belgian border.

The following day, the 30th, moving in division reserve, the regiment started later and didn't go into position for the night until 2140. A further northward movement had taken it to Laon.



CHAPTER XIV

The month of September, 1944, was one of the most momentous in 16th Infantry history. It saw the closure of the Mons-Maubeuge trap on a horde of Germans and their ultimate capture or death. It saw the crossing of the Belgian border, the sweep through Belgium and the long awaited first stride onto German soil. In September, the 16th cracked the mighty Siegfried line. And, also, in that action-packed month, the battle-tested regiment fought the bitter, costly engagements that eventually resulted in the fall of fanatically-defended Aachen.

The race after the swiftly retreating Germans swept on to the north and east. Laon was left behind. Through the 1st and 2nd the Regiment moved on, never quite catching the main body of the enemy but occassionally meeting small groups in fleeting fire fights. The First Battalion had one mission typical of the action in those days of the race for the Belgian border. It was reported that Germans were killing civilians in a town on the flank of the advance. The battalion was ordered to dispatch a platoon and tanks to drive out the killers and liberate the village. On arrival, the Germans were found to have fled. The complete story emerged after some questioning. The Germans had fired on the civilians, killing four, but only after the townspeople had opened fire on a column passing through in retreat.

It wasn't until the 3rd of September that the flying Americans found the Germans in force. And what a force! The night before, the leading elements of the division, the 18th and 26th CT's, were south of Maubeuge. The 16th was still in reserve at this point.

A Division G-2 report following the battle which occurred September, 3, 4 and 5 has his to say:

The enemy's situation was complex; although he had plenty of troops available, he was still unable to disengage himself from the Americans long enough to set up any kind of co-ordinated defense. The identities and intentions of the smaller enemy units were baffling, but there was one overall purpose evident in the enemy's strategy; to pull out every available man in the direction of the Siegfried line to the east. The plan was already well underway when the enemy column streaming east

Young, but with the daring of youth this soldier added to the proud story of the 16th with his D-Day bravery which earned a Distinguished Service Cross.

collided violently with the Americans driving north. The result of this collision was one of the most costly single defeats the Wehrmacht suffered during the Franco-Belgian campaign.

The opening move in the piece was a long thrust northwards in the direction of Mons by the Third Armored Division, operating with the First Division and on the Division's right. The drive, starting on the morning of September 2nd, over-ran enemy resistance at scattered points enroute, but it was soon apparent that the chief enemy effort was directed at cutting through the column from west to east rather than heading it off from the north. These attacks were successful in some cases, and by nightfall the armored division command post was cut off from its combat command.

Then began a fantastic series of encounters that eventually cost the thousand more to the Third Armored.

The 18th and 26th fought meeting engagements with the enemy and slaughtered hordes since the American troops had been moving tactically and the Germans administratively. Thousands more were captured.

By the time the 16th reached Maubeuge, following up the 26th which was enroute to Mons, it was assumed that the main body of the enemy had escaped or been killed or captured. Reaching Maubeuge, the Third Battalion with "F" Company of he second was sent up he main road to Mons. Reports came from the French that there were Germans in the Foret de la Laniere northeast of Maubeuge. Such reports had come in by the dozens all along the route from Paris and either were found to be without foundation or were reports of enemy who had been in certain locations but who fled before arrival of investigating forces.

They wore it short in Normandy. One soldier trims another's hair in a spare moment during the battle for Normandy.

However, acting with proper military caution, the regimental commander ordered the remainder of the Second Battalion to move along a network of roads leading northwest out of Maubeuge toward the forest. A check for enemy was to be made along these roads after which the battalion was to work back east to the Mons-Maubeeuge road and thence north across the Belgian border to Mons.

The battalion, under command of Major Wozenski, since Lt. Col. Hicks had followed "F" Company along the main road, worked its way in convoy towards the forest. It seemed likely that there were at least a few enemy in the vicinity because 25 or 30 P-47's were strafing the Bavai-Givry Road which ran across the battalion's line of march.

Third Bn. Hq. Co. takes time out for chow.

This strafing continued until the battalion was within five hundred yards of the road, then as if by scheduled arrangement, they departed. It wasn't until the head of the American column had reached a point no more than four hundred yards from the road that the enemy was discovered. Then, it seemed every weapon in the battalion and its attached units opened fire simultaneously on a surprised and demoralized enemy. Tanks moved out into fields and blasted a solid column of enemy vehicles and personnel. German trucks, half-tracks and tanks were lined four abreast, stalled on the Bavai-Givry road. Other portions of this body of enemy having fled that road earlier, due to the Air Force strafing had taken a secondary road farther south. This group encountered the tail of the American column which was composed of a company from the 87th Chemical Battalion. Cooks from that company took the first prisoners.

The situation already confused, as far as the Germans were concerned, became absolutely chaotic as the battle went on in the half-dark of the thick woods. Mortarmen from the chemical battalion and from "H" Company's mortar platoon went into action as riflemen. The battalion expended its full basic load of 45 calibre ammunition. Every man in the battalion was committed. The fight continued all night long.

At 0400 hours a German captain came to the Battalion CP and asked Major Wozenski to agree to an armistice so that German wounded might be evacuated to Liege. The request was refused and only unconditional surrender offered as an alternative. The German, who spoke English, and had no idea that only three companies confronted his large force, eventually agreed and surrender terms were drawn up. Starting at 0630 hours the Germans in the forest would surrender in groups of 50 at 15 minute intervals. They were to march into the battalion area with an officer with each group.

Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Precisely at 0630 hours the first group appeared. The processing was simple; shoulder weapons were thrown in a pile to the right, sidearms to the left. By noon, close to 2400 prisoners had come in. Ambulances and aid men were sent after more than 700 German wounded scattered through the woods. The strain on medical facilities was so great that German aid men were detailed to help out and the battalion kitchen trucks were unloaded and turned into impromptu ambulances.

The PW cage, an open field surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by one platoon became so crowded that 1200 prisoners were sent to the big Third Armored Division cage at Maubeuge. They were taken in by two riflemen who led the column and a light tank which rode herd on the rear.

The battalion stayed in the woods for 72 hours, taking prisoners and evacuating enemy wounded to the rear. The total for the period was 3256 prisoners; casualties in the Second Battalion were one man shot in the leg and two others wounded so slightly they were not evacuated. On the 6th of September, the battalion cut back to the Mons-Maubeuge Road and took over the mission of keeping the road clear.

Two infantrymen from the I & R platoon wait for German troopers to be driven from the woods during the "Battle of the Bulge." (l. to r.) Pvt. Howard L. Reagan, Coal City, Indiana; and Pvt. Elliott G. Broadweil, Hillsboro, Notrh Carolina. December, 19, 1944

This one didn't explode. A German 500 kilogram (approximately 1100 pound) bomb dropped in Normandy in the early days of the Invasion.

Going back to the morning of September 3rd: In advancing along the Mons-Maubeuge road towards Mons, the Third Battalion encountered resistance north of Maubeuge. The enemy was in sufficient force to have delayed the advance a long time and to have inflicted serious casualties but for the fact that he had been surprised and was in a considerable state of demoralization.

A short fight developed on the northern edge of Maubeuge. The head of the column then proceeded northward toward Mons, while "K" Company, with Cannon Company made a sweep along roads to the left and then back on to the main road. In this sweep, lasting over a period of several hours, almost a thousand prisoners were captured.

Continuing on the road to Mons, the battalion moved on into Mons. Defenses were set up around the city's northern and western limits and sweeps were made into the surrounding country where, in the next couple of days several hundred more prisoners were taken, a great many of them from a small patch of woods a few thousand yards east of the city.

The First Battalion was sent out of Maubeuge to the northeast to pass through Givry, east of the Mons-Maubeuge Road. Some resistance was encountered along the route, but in general its passage was unhampered. A few prisoners, but by no means as many as had been taken on the west side of the road were gathered in by this battalion.

On the 4th of September the Third Battalion operating to the north of Mons was aided by French Forces of the Interior and the Belgian F. I. who continued to report groups of dazed Germans. These were the ones which were taken during the next couple of days.

Lt. Joseph's closely cropped head dominates this shot of Third Bn. Hq. Co. officers. Also shown are Lts. Roehrig, Lennington, Wolf and Ramirez; and Capts. Dahlen and Clark.

Figures on prisoners taken were not much better than estimates. So many prisoners were turning themselves in to small units — and even individuals — and the channels of evacuation were so clogged that it was impossible to keep an accurate tabulation. Hundreds of prisoners were taken outside of normal channels; liason officers running between units took prisoners, cooks took prisoners, clerks took prisoners.

80 German anti-aircraft men, led by a major, in their confusion, tried to march through the division CP in an effort to get out of the trap.

A true assessment of the disaster inflicted on the enemy — in personnel and material — is difficult. It was plain after interrogation of PW's, however, that a total of five divisions had been destroyed in this unusual meeting engangement between Maubeuge and Mons. It was equally plain that with the loss of these troops, the German power to hold the Siegfried line around Aachen had been infinitely lessened.

On the 7th, the Regiment, having cleaned out the last small groups of the enemy around Mons, started moving to the east. In one day, a 76 mile jump was made through Charleroi and Namur to Huy, Belgium, a few miles southwest of Liege.

The swift-moving tide of Allied might had by this time liberated most of France and a good part of Belgium. The Nazi hordes had been driven back within the Reich — back to the protection of the vast and complicated system of forts and pillboxes that constituted the famed Siegfried line.

However, there were ominous intimations of trouble to come. The S-3 periodic report for September 6-7 under the heading "Combat Efficiency" said: "Gasoline supply low; needs replenishment before further movement can be expected. Tanks can go only ten more operational miles on present supply of gas. Several tank tracks sorely in need of replacement."

The following day, an all-round defense was instituted around Huy. The combat efficiency report read, "Gasoline supply nearly exhausted.

On the 9th and 10th of September another lengthy move was made through Liege to an assembly area near Herve. Only the First Battalion made contact with the enemy and that only fleetingly.

The following morning an intelligence report said, "Civilians report enemy using women and children to build AT defenses around Aachen. Two Polish civilians just in from Aachen say great many people think the war is over with."

At about this time the division was ordered to send reconnaissance in force to the Siegfried line to determine how strongly it was held. What was to have been a tentative action — a feeler, as it were — later developed into the attack that breached the vaunted barrier.

The 18th combat team, on the left, was ordered to send one battalion, reinforced, forward toward the Siegfried line in conjunction with the same sized force from CT 16 operating on the right.

This attack jumped off at 0800, 12 September, 1944. The 16th used the First Battalion. By noon, both regimenal commanding officers asked to be permitted to reinforce their leading battalions with another battalion.

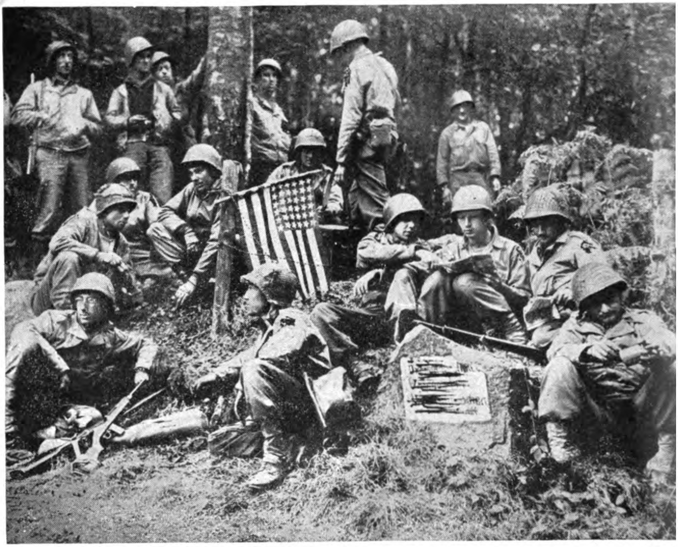
This was made necessary by the nature of the defenses and the quality of the defending troops. While they were by no means the elite of the Wehrmacht, in the positions they occupied their defense was stubborn. The fact that there were so few manning the line (the result of the disastrous losses between Mons and Maubeuge) made it possible for prospective operations against the line to be successful.

The 16th moved rapidly and by nightfall, the First Battalion of the 16th had breached the initial Siegfried Line, capturing many pillboxes, some of which were inadequately manned.

The Third Battalion of the 16th, attacking to the right of the First, ran into more stubborn resistance. "L" Company was held up at a small village on the road between Eupen and Aachen and several hundred yards south of the Siegfried Line.

Lt. Col. Horner moved his "I" Company down south to "L's" right flank from where it continued an eastward push. By nightfall it was in the woods just outside the outer defenses of the Siegfried line in position for the attack the next morning. During the night it was reinforced by a light tank platoon, a medium tank platoon and a platoon of TD's.

During the night, the First Battalion was hit heavily by enemy artillery. There were several casualties but none killed. The Third Battalion was not so fortunate. Two men were killed, one officer and seven men wounded.



First Bn. Hq. Co. having just crossed the boundary from Belgium into Germany, breaks out the Stars and Stripes to commemorate the event.

Pushing off the following day, Sept. 13th, "L" Company knocked out three trucks, one AT gun and two pillboxes in the outer fortifications of the Siegfried Line. However, the most effective work was done by "I" Company, which, by nightfall, had breached the mighty line.

With their great concentration of firepower from tanks, TD's, antitank guns and small arms, they had overwhelmed a section of the line, cleaned out the pillboxes that confronted them and had reached unfortified areas back of the line. During the day they had knocked out pillboxes, they had rushed a tank with a pole charge and knocked it out, and they had suffered some casualties from mortar and artillery fire, but hardly any at all from the defenders on the line itself. Approaching through woods, it had been possible to come very close to the fortifications before the defenders could place effective fire on the Americans. After getting so close, when all the weapons in the reinforced company opened up, the Germans were unable to withstand the intensity of the assault and the defenses crumbled and fortifications fell.

Meanwhile, the First Battalion had been pulled back 3000 yards from its sector of the line in order to use another road in continuing the attack.

On the 14th, the advance continued. More of the Siegfried Line crumbled. The Second Battalion spent a good part of the day blowing up "dragon's teeth" to permit vehicular passage. Parts of the battalion continued through the Siegfried Line on the flanks of the previous break-through, finding most of the pillboxes encountered deserted.

Rain made the woods' trails difficult for passage by vehicles. Tanks bogged down, jeeps carrying ammunition were unable to get through, but despite these handicaps, troops continued to pour through the break and into the country beyond. Only the tanks were held up for long periods by felled trees which the Germans had left in great quantity to block the trails.

Another problem which had been causing concern for several days was gradually becoming more acute. Gasoline for vehicles was at a premium. Every move had to be planned with the fuel limitations in mind. This handicap was becoming so great that the probability of continuing much farther on the present drive didn't seem good.

The day's work was not unopposed. In addition to several casualties, 6 jeeps were destroyed by artillery fire and one anti-tank gun was knocked out. However, all objectives had been reached by 2100.

The advance now had swung toward the south of Aachen and was aimed around that city's flank with a view to cutting it off from the rear.

81 mm mortarmen from "M" Co. await fire orders in the shelter of a shattered pillbox outside Stolberg Two battle-weary soldiers attempt to relax in the lee of a German pill-box during a short surcease from fighting.

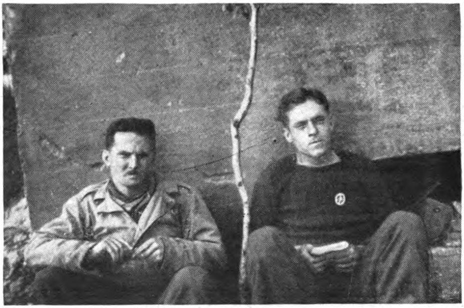
The Third Battalion was more or less stationary, establishing road blocks to cover the left flank of the regiment. More demolitions work was done on the dragon's teeth by the First Battalion. Leading companies in the Second Battalion received fairly heavy small arms, mortar and artillery fire. More pillboxes were cleared and the main fortifications of the Siegfried line were reached. Vigorous assaults by reinforced companies cracked a portion of this line — breaching the great wall which had been designed to withstand the strongest attacks of the invading forces. By this time, not only had German soil known the trespass of American feet, but her strongest defenses had been pierced and a way opened into her interior.

Had sufficient forces and the necessary supplies been available at this time it is possible that the war might have ended months earlier. However, the supply problem which had become increasingly great had reached a point where a general attack all along the line was an impossibility. It is a tragic fact that from this point on for several weeks, the Americans turned from attackers to bitterly besieged defenders.

During the 15th, "C" Company of the First Battalion received the first of many counterattacks which were to hit the regiment during the period which followed. Tanks half-tracks and infantry swarmed in to overwhelm the company. Fighting back fiercely, the soldiers of the rifle company broke the attack, took some prisoners but, in so doing, suffered fairly heavy casualties themselves.

The remainder of the regiment was under fire all day. Mortars, artillery and small arms were piling up in front of the 16th. The Germans had finally halted their headlong flight, were regrouping and defending fanatically. Indeed, from defense, they had turned to attack.

The next day, Sept. 16th, enemy fire of all kinds continued to pour into the positions held south of Aachen. The strain was beginning to tell on men who had been under continuous fire for days. One platoon of "G" Company was particularly hard hit on this day. This company was in such close contact with the enemy that the Germans could be heard talking.



Two battle-weary soldiers attempt to relax at the rear of a German pillbox during a lull in the fighting.

Another counterattack came in, this time against "E" Company. Some positions were overrun but recaptured at the cost of several casualties.

During the day, the Second Battalion pushed off for the small town of Eilendorf, entered it successfully and cleared it with only a few casualties.

A contrast in garb. One doggie watches a laundry job while attired in overcoat as his companion shivers in shirt and shorts. Shot made outside a German fortification in Siegfried Line.

On the 17th September, things became worse. In position around Aachen's southern perimeter, the 16th began to bear the full brunt of the Germans' furious efforts to save their frontier city, which by now had become a symbol of German resistance. Exhortation by the highest Nazi officials to the city's military and civilian defenders were bearing fruit in a fanatical effort to dislodge the Americans who occupied the ground threatening the town.

"E" Company was counterattacked in the hours before dawn. It was a repetition of the days before. A constant pounding, a constant rain of shells, a constant pressure that was wearing men's nerves to the breaking point. Higher authority did not seem to be cognizant of the strain to which the troops were being subjected.

The day before, First Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Driscoll had reported, "The men here are going crazy.They are getting pounded day after day and attacking day after day. The are going wacky. It is real and not put on. I know the real thing. The Doc ought to make a report to division. It isn't just one man, it's quite a few."

In the present counterattack on "E", the fighting was at close range. The attack was repulsed with small arms, mortars, and in many places along the front with hand grenades and hand-to-hand fighting.

In one gap, between "G" and "E" companies, the enemy had commenced an infiltration. Two platoons of "I" Company were shifted to this hole, cleaned out the Germans who had come through and went into position to prevent any further passage.

Counterattacks continued to develop from the small crossroads town of Haaron. None of these were in great force but their cumulative effect was wearing in the extreme.

"M" Co. serves hot chow. Kitchen personnel in the 16th ran considerable risk getting hot chow to the front line doggies.

To add to the attacks themselves, the constant and accurate German artillery fire made existence precarious and that existence nerve-wracking to a terrible degree. Their fire was made particularly accurate by excellent observation. From their positions on one hill, which became famous as Cruxifix Hill because of a crucifix which surmounted it, and from the town of Verlautenheide, they loked down on the regiment. They observed every daylight move and they poured a constant heavy fire on the men below. To move was to invite fire. One man out of his hole would draw several rounds from guns as large as 88's.

On the morning of this day, the 17th, the enemy launched a counter-attack on the First and Second Battalions. This attack was the first major enemy effort to drive off the First Division threat to Aachen. The attack was experienced, well-coordinated and powerful. Moreover, it was preceded by the most intense artillery fire of the campaign. After exceptionally heavy infantry "in-fighting" the attack was beaten off with heavy losses to the enemy.

From prisoners it was learned that the attacking division was one which had been withdrawn from the Russian front in the summer, reorganized, re-equipped and sent to the Western front to help stop the American drive. The division was one of the best the invading forces had faced since reaching the continent.

By 11 o'clock, the attack had been beaten off by infantry and heavy artillery fire and the First Battalion working with an armored unit of the Third Armored Division had started attacking eastward towards Munsterbusch. By nightfall, little progress had been made against the determined resistance put up by the Germans.

The next day, the 18th, the enemy again tried to work around "E" Company. One squad of men was surrounded but fought their way out of the pocket. Eventually the attack was driven off, but it had cost the company another 8 casualties. Other small, probing attacks continued to hit the Second Battalion line all morning. It seemed likely that the Germans were attempting to find a soft spot against which to launch a major counterattack.

The First Battalion was ordered to continue to assist the armor in its attack on Munsterbusch.

The rear of a German pillbox was a fairly safe place to take one's ease between attacks.

Information began to come in from the battalions on methods of attack on fortifications. The First Battalion reported that after the second day, they encountered (and this was particularly true of the previous day's attack toward Munsterbusch) enemy dug in outside of pillboxes. Prisoners reported that artillery landing near the boxes produced pressure on the eardrums that was unbearable. It was assumed that this accounted for their abandoning the boxes in favor of dug-in poitions in the open.

The weakest points of the pillboxes, reported the battalion, was the rear door. There was no way to lock these doors, and none of them had been able to withstand the fire of the 75 mm guns of the medium tanks. Tanks firing direct fire with infantry alongside the tanks in the approach to the pillboxes seemed to be the most effective method of assault.

"I" Company reported that it had spotted a well camouflaged fortification, with trenches around it. The company pulled up two tanks unil machine gun fire was received. The tanks then opened fire with their 75's, knocking the camouflage off. Then, keeping their machine guns going to keep the enemy down, the tanks supported the infantry which charged with bazookas. The assault was so formidable that the enemy inside surrendered.

Meanwhile, the First Battalion which was attacking towards Munsterbusch was running into heavy resistance, just as had been the case the day before. The defense set up by the enemy was well-coordinated and stubborn. Moreover, the terrain was well-suited to delaying action. Every house and, at times, every room in Munsterbusch, was contested. Enemy artillery was more in evidence and patrols were blocked off soon after they had crossed the lines. In spite of the tenacity of the defense, however, enemy prisoners picked up indicated that the morale of the defending forces was not good.

The battalion was in difficulty all afternoon. Heavy artillery fire was followed by counterattacks on "A" and "B" Companies. The situation was so bad that the battalion commander was asking for help. Tanks were requested, but there was a delay in getting them up.

To make the regimental picture blacker, there was a stoppage on orders for 81 and 60 mm mortar ammuniton. A small reserve was on hand, but there was no immediate prospect of replenishment if this should have to be used. Also, the Third Battalion was catching a great deal of artillery fire.

The 19th of September found the First Battalion still heavily engaged with the enemy. Attempting to attack, it was attacked by the enemy. However, by 1300, to the quesion from division, "What's going on," regiment reported, "Red (First) Battalion getting things more under control. Pushed out a little, got pushed back and pushed forward again. They are in a pretty hot spot. They knocked out three tanks, 1 SP and 1 AT gun. They've had quite a few casualties." (A casualty report later showed 1 officer and 23 men wounded and evacuated from the battalion itself, during the morning, and 1 officer and 5 men wounded and evacuated from attached units. Number of dead was not given in this report, altho there were several.)

By nightfall, the battalion was in position to hold for the night. The other battalions had established themselves defensively, also, and starting early in the evening, began a night of active patrolling. "L" Company's patrol was shelled as it returned. One man was killed. The next morning, September 20th, the First Battalion was ordered to continue the attack towards Stolberg. Its seizure of Munsterbusch had been a preliminary to an advance on Stolberg and, despite the pounding the unit had taken in the preceding several days, it was again ordered to push off.

Division was concerned over the possibility of losing control of this battalion. The commanding general told the regimental commander to give the Armored Division for whom the battalion had been working every possible cooperation lest corps order the 16th to release the battalion to armored control.

At 0850, S-2 reported to Division G-2: "There is a tank at 872446 shooting at us, and there were three tanks observed on a hill to the northeast. Otherwise it is quiet but for some counter battery on our 4.2's. Also, they laid in 15 to 20 rounds in a barrage and worked from company to company, but everyone is well dug in."

At 0908, Regimental S-3 called the First Battalion-3 to tell him, "Here is the armored plan. They are going to clean up the town (Stolberg). You will help to clean up the railroad. Then they will go ahead. You will then tie in with "F" Company, where "C" Company used to be. You will aid the armored in every way possible. We have to help them out or the corps commander will take one of our battalions and attach it to the armored." Red (First Bn) 3: "Hell, they can't do that! Here is our strength: Co "A", 4 officers and 98 men; "B" Company, 110; "C" Company, 110. We have lost about 300 men in the last five days."

Although Stolberg was practically knocked level, the enemy had good troops who were still fighting in the cellars. It became necessary to attach "L" Company of the 18th Infantry to the First Battalion. (The Third Battalion of the 18th had been under 16th control for the past two days.)

However, even with this assistance, Companies. "A" and "C" were unable to advance. "B" Company worked ahead slowly, running into stubborn resistance every step of the way. The enemy was using fortified houses which were hard to crack. Patrols sent out from "B" Company vanished. It was assumed that enemy hiding in tunnels which honeycombed the area had ambushed the men.

The Second Battalion was receiving artillery and tank fire during this period. Altho they could see the gun flashes, the ammunition situation in Division Artillery was so bad that fire was refused unless it could be observed. At the same time "C" company was receiving enemy infiltration, with house to house fighting. The threat was repelled, although the action was so close that supporting tanks could not be used.

It wasn't all hard going and there was time out for group shots such as this one of four "doggies" outside a demolished German fortification.

After a day of intense activity, Stolberg was mainly in enemy hands when defensive positions had to be established for the night.

The next day, the 21st of September, the fight went on for Stolberg. Every house was contested. Holes had to be blasted, and passageways sealed to prevent the enemy from appearing in the rear of the advancing Americans. The Germans had thinned out considerably but those remaining were well located and had been ordered to fight until killed. Fighting continued most of the day with the First Battalion slowly advancing, slowly clearing Stolberg.

During the day, the rest of the regiment improved its positions and tried as well as it could to protect itself from artillery fire which persisted throughout the day, inflicting casualties on both the Second and Third Battalions.

For the next two days, activity was confined mainly to patrolling. The positions in Stolberg were consolidated and the regiment dug deeper to avoid the constant artillery fire which continued to come in with frightful accuracy due to the enemy's observation from Crucifix Hill and the Verlautenheide Ridge.

Determination of the enemy to resist was evinced in the afternoon of the 23rd when the Third Battalion used a loud speaker to demand surrender. The reply was a heavy artillery barrage which hit "K" Company.

There was little offensive activity for the next six days. On the 24th, the Third Battalion of he 18th, attached to the 16th, had an attack which drove part of its "I" Company out of position. When a counterattack was planned to regain the lost ground, the 16th povided tanks to support the foot troops. The counterattack was successful and the First Division settled down to protecting the territory it had taken although suffering casualties from artillery fire every day.

On the 30th an enemy patrol of 10 men tried to break through "K" Company's lines. The attempt cost them five men killed or wounded. The remainder fled. The Third Battalion established several listening posts well in advance of the lines. The entire regiment continued its active patrolling.

Plans for the attack on Aachen, itself, which by now had been almost completely surrounded for more than 10 days, went on — a thorough preparation preceding any attempt at an assault on the city proper.

On the night of the 3rd of October, at 2335, the enemy made a large scale attempt to retake the pill box line occupied by the Third Battalion. The main attack hit "K" Company.

Prisoners taken during the attack reported that the signal for the opening barrage was to be the detonation of a "Goliath", a small, radio-controlled, explosive-laden tank. This terrific explosion was heard and immediately an extremely heavy concentration of artillery hit the battalion. Between 3,000 and 4,000 rounds came in on "K" Company in half an hour.

Following the shelling came an assault by enemy engineers and infantry carrying flame throwers, blinders and demolitions. Supporting them were four assault guns, two of which were carrying part of the assault force. As these self propelled guns reached a crossroads in front of "K", one was disabled by mines which the company had laid a few nights before. Another which had accompanied it to this point, withdrew to where the remaining two had stayed to deliver support fires. All three of these were eventually destroyed on other mines.

The attack persisted for three hours, penetrating part of "K" Company's line before it was repulsed with the help of fourteen battalions of artillery and fiercely counterattacking American infantrymen.

Battalion losses were light compared to those of the enemy. Not only were several prisoners taken, many wounded and dead found, but the next day, enemy vehicles were observed picking up many more wounded who had been caught in the area shelled by friendly artillery some distance to the front of the meeting place of the two forces.

The following day, three of the self-propelled guns which had been immobilized by mines were destroyed with demolitions charges. The regiment kept up vigorous patrolling throughout this day and also on the 5th and 6th.

At 0400, October 8th, the 18th Infantry pushed for Verlautenheide and Crucifix Hill, the possession of which by the enemy had cost the 16th so heavily in casualties. A demonstration by the 16th's Cannon Company and all the mortars in the regiment created a diversion while the 18th set out in a night attack. By daylight, the 18th was on the hill and in the town of Verlautenheide. It took the remainder of the day to mop up pillboxes and woods.

During the next several days, with the stage finally set for the assault on Aachen, the 26th Infantry which had kept up a continual pressure on the outskirts of the town, finally started a concentrated drive westward to take the city. Meanwhile, enemy strength was building up in front of the 18th and 16th along the Verlautenheide Ridge. This culminated, on the 15th, in a heavy attack on "G" and "I" Companies.

The first intimations of trouble came about noon when an enemy force came up a railroad draw and engaged in a small arms fight with the two companies. The Regimental Journal gives a good picture of activities during the next couple of hours.

1210: S-3 to 18th Infantry-3 — The right of "G" Company and on "I" Company, an enemy attack. Wozenski says they have been using railroad draw as an approach

Pvt. Michael C. DiCarlo, Company "H", Second Battalion, utilizes wheelbarrow to transport 81 mm mortar ammunition to position in nearby field.

1215: S-3 to Third Bn.-3 — Jerry has come up the railroad draw and engaged in small arms fight with "G" and "I" Companies. Have you anything in front of "K" and "L" companies. (Third Bn.-3) Our communications are shot. We haven't heard anything. (S-3) Continue to lay wire, more mines, booby traps, trip flares, everything possible to stop any attack.

1227: Second Bn 2 to S-3 — Our communication lines are out with "G" and "I" Companies. Situation serious. Considerable amount of small arms, mostly enemy.

1240: Second Bn. C. O. to S-3 — A runner just came from Richmond. (Capt. Kimball Richmond, "I" Company C. O.) "G" and "I" Companies are being overrun. Situation is critical. Need artillery immediately on Point 61 and woods in vicinity of Point 61, left of the railroad. Get air, too, if possible.

1241: S-3 to F. A. Bn.-3 — I just got a report from the 2nd Battalion that "G" and "I" Companies are being overrun. They want fire immediately at Point 61, and the woods to the left of the railroad. (F. A. Bn.-3) Okay . . .

1242: 2nd Bn. C. O. to Lt. Kestlinger (Liaison officer) — We want air immediately. 3 or 4 tanks moving on "F" Company. 8 tanks with Infantry overrunning "I" and "G" Companies. (Lt. Kestlinger) Major White is getting air now, talking to Division. (2nd Bn. C. O.) They are hitting me hard. Get a Divarty shoot on the woods.

1242: (S-3 to Division G-3) — Infiltration around the right flank of "G" Company. Engaged in small arms fight. "I" Company is being hit from the north in considerable strength. Small arms. We want air out there immediately. Tanks are moving in on "I" and "G" Companies, going over toward "E" Company, too. We are getting artillery on it but we want air.

1244: Maj. Rawie (Artillery Liaison officer) to F. A. Bn.-3) Priority mission for Divarty. "G" and "I" Companies are being overrun with tanks and infantry. Place concentrations immediately on Point 61 and 894452 (map coordinates).

1246: S-3 to Third Bn. C. O.) — 2nd Battalion reports 7 tanks coming up at "G" Company, and "I" Company is being hit by infantry. 3 tanks hitting "E" Company. We are getting artillery on them. Also trying to get air.

1250: S-3 to C. O. 634th TD Bn. — Have the two TD's you have up there ready to move down with Third Battalion and operate with your TD's down there. How many TD's are down there? (634th TD Bn.) Four. (S-3) Have those two go with the others, immediately. Get your Recon Platoon ready in case we need them.

1254: Lt. Kestlinger to I & R — Get the platoon alerted ready to go. If Lt. Stockwell is around, ask him to drop into the CP.

1255: S-3 to Third Bn. C. O. — No further information on 2nd Battalion. We are having two TD's join your four. They are over behind Brand, firing indirect fire.

1258: Regt. C. O. to 2nd BN. C. O. — What is the situation? (2nd Bn. C. O.) We are out of communication with Richmond and Dawson. (Company commanders, "I" and "G".) A message came that "G" and "I" Companies were being overrun. Situation critical. Wanted artillery on Point 61 and woods in vicinity. A message just came from Dawson. Situation very critical. People on the left must act. (Regt. C. O.) Do you need tanks? (2nd Bn. C. O.) Not just now. I will yell when I need them. Get the people on the left working.

1310: S-3 to 2nd Bn. Executive Officer — What is the latest? (2nd Bn. Exec.) Karas reports enemy half-tracks moving out on road from 300 yards northwest of woods heading for "I" Company. Three Mark VI's heading for "E" Company and probably for "I" Company. Small arms fire diminished somewhat. (S-3) Perhaps due to artillery. We threw in a division shoot. (2nd Bn. Exec.) Get one battery to place constant artillery fire on road to cut off the axis of their advance. (S-3) We are sending tank and TD platoon leaders down to your CP from the 3rd Battalion. 6 TD's, also one TD for maintenance, going down to "I" Company in case you need them. What is the latest? (2nd Bn. Exec.) The situation on the left of "G" Company is vey critical. 2nd Battalion, 18th, is firing some mortars in support. You know that it is very difficult to move on the ground. If "G" and "I" Companies are knocked off, it will be difficult to regain it. There are some very good positions there. The only good possible passage is through "E" Company. (S-3) I am having the I & R and Recon Platoon of the TD's alerted in case we need to throw something in.

1317: Regt. C. O. to Division G-3 — There are 7 tanks in "I" Company area. (G-3) We have alerted 3rd Armored. (Regt. C. O.) I think there has been a penetration, not a great run-over. I can't tell you yet what the situation is. There are 3 tanks in "E" Company area. We haven't heard from "F" Company yet.

1336: G to S-3 — "B" Company of 18th ordered to Eilendorf to be in support of you. The idea is to throw them in any gap that occurs. No air yet. Artillery all firing now. 1st Battalion, 26th, less one company has been alerted, and have one company of tanks with them. Keep us posted.

1345: S-3 to 2nd Bn.-3 — Any more information? (2nd Bn. 3) 2nd Battalion, 18th, said they were receiving attacks by tanks and infantry. Artillery observer with 18th said he thought tanks were withdrawing from in front of their 2nd battalion. (S-3) We have some planes over now. No bombs, but they can strafe. (2nd Bn.-3) Any place in triangle 73, 62, 74 is a good target, particularly between 62 and 69. That is the assembly area from where they have been coming. (S-3) Maj. Lord is on here. How about getting smoke out there so we can put air on these tanks. (2nd Bn-3) 903447 — four tanks left of there, tanks and half tracks also milling around here. (S-3) Maj. Lord, that woods in there is the assembly area for those tanks. (G-3) Planes are diving on military smoke out there now. (2nd Bn. 3) I hope it is not our people. (S-3) Find out where it is. (2nd Bn. 3) Was it red smoke? (G-3) I don't know. (S-3) Our artillery is landing close to our own troops. It is in a good spot, though. (G-3) Keep posted with Hall and keep watching location of tanks. Have 7th Field take care of smoke when you are ready. (2nd Bn. 3) Planes came down and strafed close in. We are trying to get a report on it. (S-3) OK. Watch the tanks. Get a good target and have Stabler lay on red smoke.

1346: G-3 to Lt. Kestlinger: Planes coming from 30th Division. No bombs but plenty of ammunition. Here is something that just came in, apparently from Forward Observer, 7th field. Reports attack beaten off.

1414: G-3 to S-3: What is your situation now? (S-3) Considerable enemy tanks and half tracks assembled at (gives coordinates) We put on artillery in that area. The attack started about ten this morning. Tanks and infantry started near Quinx, but our artillery scattered them some.

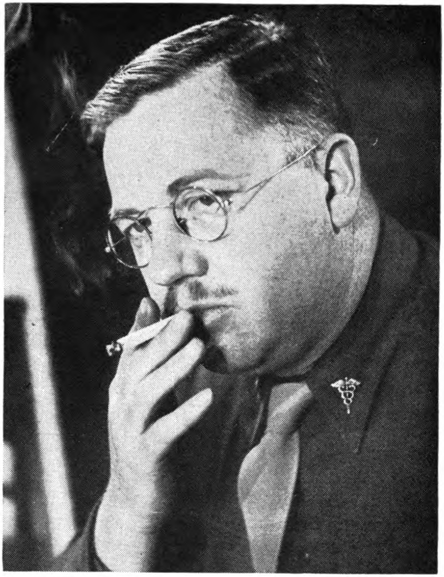
They saw 4 Mark VI tanks at Wambuch. We had artillery and air on them this morning. Artillery claimed they knocked out four of them. Infantry attacked "I" and "G" companies. 7 tanks came in on "G" company, 3 of them were Mark VI which turned and went towards Quinx and didn't come all the way in on "G" as expected. However, infantry did come in. Had a fire fight. They approached from Haarenerhof and Quinx. We put plenty of artillery in on the attack. We got a report that "G" and "I" companies were overrun. The situation is clearing some.

Maj. Jacob E. Margolis entered service with the 16th in June, 1941. Successively a platoon leader, company commander and military government officer, Maj. Margolis, at the time of his departure for the United States was Regimental S-3.

1417: 2nd Bn. 3 to S-3 — "I" Company situation under control at the moment, but the enemy close in strength. "G" Company situation still tense, especially on the left. 4 tanks entered the woods at 902455 twenty minutes ago. "F" Company picked up one wounded PW in front of them. We would like some more air. (S-3) I will see what I can do.

By 1500 the enemy tanks were withdrawn and mass concentrations of mortar, artillery and machine gun fire had repulsed the infantry. At 1614, the penetration had been sealed off and the situation restored. The enemy left a very large number of dead in front of the 16th's position

Maj. Charles E. Tegtmyer, Regimental surgeon, landed at Arzew, Africa, with the 16th and served with the regiment throughout the remainder of its campaigns. Holds distinction of being "most decorated surgeon" in U. S. Army.



considering the narrow front on which the attack had been launched. It appeared to have been a spearhead effort designed to breach the lines in a narrow gap through which enemy forces could be poured to work on the remainder of the American line from the flanks of the breach and in the rear of the positions which had held.

All night long, the situation remained critical on the corner defended by "G" and "I" companies. 5 tanks lurked in front of "G" delivering harassing fire throughout the night until an artillery barrage in combination with direct fire from tanks and TD's caused them to withdraw about daylight under cover of a ground fog. Shortly after that (all this on the morning of the 16th of October) "I" company was hit by another counterattack. This one again was with infantry supported by tanks.

The attack was repulsed after about two hours. A few prisoners were taken. They reported that 4.2 chemical mortar fire the night before had caused about 40 casualties in one company. Also, it developed that among the tanks facing the 16th were three Shermans (American).

One pillbox taken before daylight, by the enemy, remained in his hands. And the same time this attack had come in on the regiment, the 18th had been hit, also. They had repulsed the enemy but throughout the day the Germans kept a continual pressure on the line.

In the city of Aachen where the 26th had been able to make a juncture between their two attacking battalions, a counterattack developed. The enemy was driven off and the slow, bloody work of clearing the city continued.

Throughout the day there was trouble all along the line but no concentrated threat. At 1140, Second Battalion S-3 reported to Lt. Kestlinger: I just returned from "G" and "I" Companies. Things are a little rough — in fact very rough. Here is the story. In front of "I" Company Jerries are in woods at 894446, then go down a little trail to junction, then go southwest to to next trail junction down to 895444, Jerries lined up there. The pill box lost by "I" Company is occupied by 8 officers and their bodvguards, according to a PW. Company "I" had 8 men in that pill box, fought out infantry, and then tanks returned with infantry firing directly at pill box. Richmond's men abandoned the pill box and went into position on the right hand side of pill box. Richmond is not in contact with them but figures they are OK. No casualties. The grouping up indicates another attack. Dawson ("G" Company) doesn't know if he can hold another attack through there. The men are worn out.

That night "G" Company attacked to attempt to straighten out its line and "I" Company went to try to regain its lost pill box. The results of those actions are carried in a report from the Second Battalion S-3 to Regimental S-3.

I just talked to Dawson and he says that he has position restored where gun was. (An anti-tank gun had been overrun in the German counterattack.) The gun was definitely knocked out. He was not able to take the house. Said he would get it tomorrow if necessary. Now Dawson is trying to effect relief. Has one squad relieved. Dawson is consolidating his men on the right of this group who are going into position as relief. Dawson's men killed 17 Jerries including five from the tank crew of the tank which was back of the house. The attack to capture the positions killed 8 enemy and captured 1. Total enemy killed — 25. Richmond is trving to get the pill box back. He is not pulling his men back for relief but putting extra men in the gap. Both companies will try and put wire and mines out later when things quiet down. The men have had no food for 24 hours. Their last hot meal was the night before last. Possibly we can get them a hot meal tomorrow. I feel that Jerry will be back tomorrow. Up to now he hasn't used a heavy concentration of artillery. I am afraid a heavy artillery preparation will be used the next time. I don't know just how well these men who have been up there all this time will be able to take a heavy preparation of artillery. Time will tell."

For the next several days the 26th continued its clean up of Aachen. No more sustained efforts were made against the 18th and 16th, holding the ridges to the south and east of the city, although the enemy never for a minute let the two regiments forget that he was capable of causing serious trouble at any time.

On the 19th, Capt. O'Brien of Cannon Company sent the following interesting report to S-2: "This may sound funny, but it is serious. We just got 4 children. The oldest one isn't over 7 years old. They were firing into one of my gun sections. One was using an M-1, used the wrong ammunition and blew the end off the gun. These kids probably have been influenced by the talk of the folks at home. Something has to be done about this sort of thing.

At every opportunity, the 16th laid more mines and strung more wire, attempting to supplement their manpower with these devices designed to further hamper any German attempt to breakthrough the dearly held line.

By comparison with the two previous weeks' activity, the regiment entered on a period of quiet. Actually there was still a good bit of shelling, patrol actions and attempts at enemy infiltration. On the 24th of October, an enemy platoon worked into "C" Company and dislodged a squad. Reinforced, this same squad retook its area.

A report early in the morning of the same day from the First Battalion S-3 to Regiment said: "The two man OP in the factory had the enemy work up on them. They were firing in bursts and throwing hand grenades. One of our men was wounded in the calf. Briggs fired 60 mm mortar in the direction they came from. In return he got 10 rounds of 150, and 15 rounds of 81. The only casualty is one latrine."

The artillery fire which kept things uncomfortable nearly all the time was tied in with mortar and indirect machine gun fire from time to time. The enemy appeared to be digging and wiring himself in in much the manner that the 16th had. On the 28th a heavy concentration of fire hit Third Battalion areas, destroying two jeeps and a half track loaded with 57 mm ammunition.

The next day, a few guns continued to shell this battalion. Several more vehicles were destroyed and an MP killed. Later, a TD was destroyed and the TD fuel dump hit. The fire was so good that it seemed more than likely that the enemy had an observer right in the town of Brand, in which and near which most of the fire was coming.

Another evidence of enemy intelligence activity was indicated by the report of a man in American officer's uniform, wearing a First Division insignia on his helmet who appeared at one of the outposts of an adjoining division and obtained information as to strength and disposition of the American units.

During part of this time, the Third Battalion had been in Brand in reserve, recuperating from some of the intense wear and tear of the bitter weeks the regiment had just gone through. On Nov. 2, the Third moved on line to replace the First which was withdrawn to the vicinity of Brand for its turn at rest.

Active patrolling continued with the majority being done at night since daylight work was suicidal. On the 5th, a contact patrol to the Third Armored Division, led by Lt. Kelly of the Third Battalion was fired on by mortars, presumed to be American. Half the patrol was wounded and the officers killed.

A patrol from the same battalion, on the following day was also shot up, two men being wounded.

During this time, the night was enlivened by the passage of huge numbers of Allied planes on raids over Germany. At times, too, there were German ships which occasionally bombed along the line, and at other times dropped large numbers of flares, sometimes following with bombings although at other times no other offensive action followed the flares. Frequently enemy interceptors would shoot down our bombers and a considerable number of airmen who had parachuted from flaming planes were rescued by the foot troops.

On the 9th of November, the 16th was relieved. It was not a relief for rest as a combat team but merely to effect plans preparatory to a new attack. With Aachen gone, the Roer River Line appeared as the next big objective before the American forces in this vicinity. If all went well, even though stubborn resistance might be encountered, the seizure of objectives along this line might well be considered in the fairly immediate future.

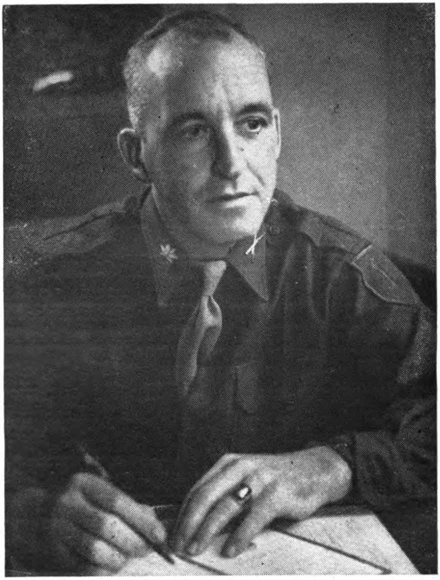
CITATION OF UNITS

Under the provisions of Section IV, War Department Circular 333, 22 December, 1944, Companies "G" and "I", 16th Infantry, are cited for outstanding performance of duty in action. The citation is as follows:

"During the period 15—17 October 1944, Companies "G" and "I", 16th Infantry, lodged in captured fortifications along the outskirts of Eilendorf, Germany, were charged with defending a ridge overlooking and commanding approaches to Aachen. Loss of the ridge would mean elimination of ability to exert pressure against Aachen by American artillery and would constitute a blow to Allied strategy. Further it would result in isolation and almost certain annihilation of a friendly infantry regiment occupying an adjacent hill. Early in the morning of 15 October, 1944, the enemy, taking full advantage of the rugged terrain, infiltrated the Company "G" sector and suurounded the mortar platoon positions. Coincidentally, three enemy infantry companies, augmented by tanks and supported by artillery and mortar concentrations, in an initial frontal assault on Company "G" and "I" positions, threatened to overrun and eliminate the comparatively small defending body. Disregarding its losses in human life, the enemy pushed to the top of the ridge and after bitter hand-to-hand fighting occupied some of the American dug-in positions. German tanks penetrated the outer belt defenses and edged forward to clear a path for infantry and demolition squads. Employing grenades and bayonets and engaging in close combat, Company "G" and "I" personnel fought valiantly to regain lost emplacements and to repel German armor. The enemy waged a spirited battle in his attempt to capture this strategic terrain feature, but these two companies refused to yield ground in the face of overwhelming odds. Rather than surrender the ridge, Companies "G" and "I" called for American artillery to saturate the sector with a sustained barrage. Then, grasping the offensive, Companies "G" and "I" moved forward, carried the battle to the enemy and drove the German forces from the ridge. Although defeated in the first attempt to recapture the ridge, the enemy granted defending companies little time to consolidate and prepare for the next attack. Quickly marshalling his still powerful infantry and armor the reinforced enemy struck with renewed effort only to receive another major setback. Three times the enemy made desperate attempts to retake the vital ridge and each time preceded his drive with intense artillery and mortar bombardment. But again, despite cold, hunger and fatigue and a numerically superior enemy, the gallant defenders held their ground, engaging in close-in fighting. The final assault was crushed decisively with heavy losses of men, weapons and tanks, irreparably impairing the enemy's striking power and firmly securing the ridge. For three days the strength, courage and determination of two infantry companies stood between elements of the German Army and a serious breakthrough of the First Infantry Division's foothold on German soil. In this 72 hour battle, the defenders faced at different times 3 battalions of enemy troops and approximately 25 tanks, sustaining 37 major casualties against an estimated 300 for the enemy. The magnificent heroism, combat proficiency and brilliant achievements of Companies "G" and "I", 16th Infantry, helped pave the way for the eventual capture of Aachen".

By Command of Brigadier General Andrus

Verdi B. Barnes
Colonel, G. S. C.
Chief of Staff.



Maj. Thomas P. McKoan served with the 26th Division and 13th Corps before joining the 16th. He served through 5 European campaigns as S-4 of the regiment.

The first objective assigned the 16th in the new drive was the village of Hamich, some 7000 yards east of Stolberg. In the plans for the attack, the First Battalion was designated as the one which would take the hamlet.

Heavy pressure continued along the entire front. Other divisions were meeting counterattacks and in some instances withdrawing somewhat.

The shortage of ammunition that had been felt all through the fighting from the end of September until the time the 16th had been pulled out of line complicated plans for the renewed attack. Early orders had indicated the regiment would have 41,400 rounds of mortar ammunition, an amount which would permit a heavy preparatory fire before the jump-off. However, it turned out that this figure was a mistake and that only 10% of this amount was to be permitted. The regimental commander speaking to Divisional G-4 asked if it weren't possible to use some of the regiment's basic load of ammunition. The G-4 replied that if it were used, it couldn't be replaced since Army had said there just wasn't any more to be had.

Having moved up into an assembly area near Schevenhutte a few thousand yards east of Stolberg, the regiment underwent more artillery fire, although in lesser quantity than had been the case around Stolberg. The weather was terrible. Cold and rain made life out of doors so miserable that as far back as division concern was felt for the troops. Trench foot was becoming a serious problem. An effort was made to supply men with several pairs of socks and soldiers were ordered to rub each others' feet to maintain circulation and prevent trench foot's setting in.

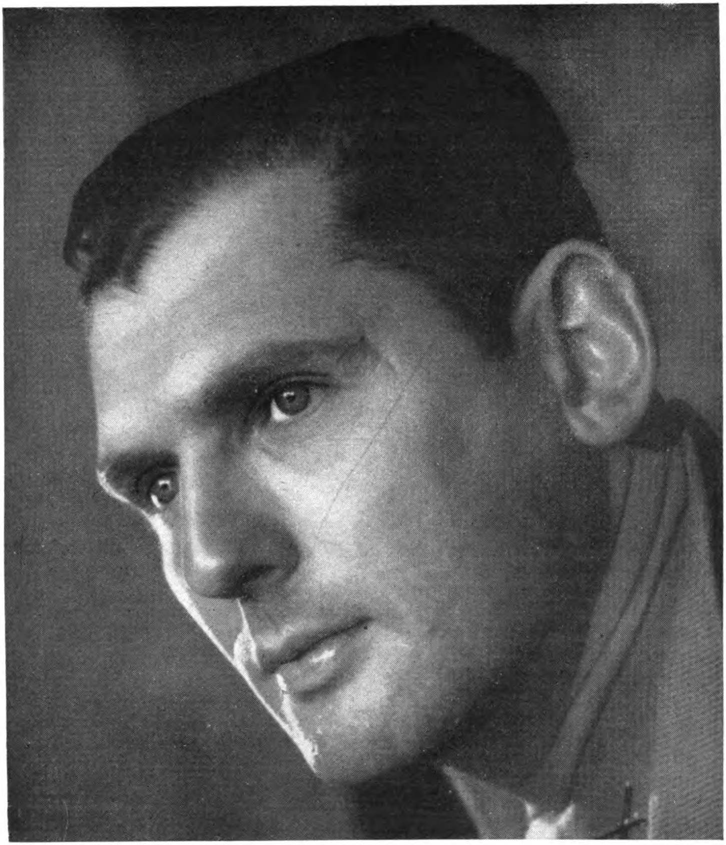
Conditions were so bad that division gave permission for fires to be built, subject to regimental discretion. Shelter back in the town of Schevenhutte was found for three platoons at a time from the First Battalion.

On the 16th of November, the attack began. Moving out to the north, the First Battalion progressed fairly steadily. At one time during the afternoon, "C" Company received a counterattack. Late in the afternoon, the 47th Infantry of the Ninth Division which had been assigned the territory on the left of the 16th had been forced to hold up. As a result, the 16th's Third Battalion had been ordered out of reserve to press forward on the First Battalion's left to attack and hold key ground on the flank.

By nightfall, initial objectives had been taken, but the town of Hamich had not been entered. Instead of pushing the attack, companies were ordered to dig in for the night.

During the day, Capt. O'Brien of Cannon Company was killed.

That night, the enemy counterattacked, most of their effort hitting the First Battalion. "C" Company was hit from the rear, the attack coming from the east. Previously prepared artillery fires were extremely



Lt. Col. George A. Makris. Commanding officer 60th Armored Infantry Battalion, 9th Armored Division during combat, he served as Second Battalion commander from Sept. 1945 till Feb. 1946.

useful in beating off the enemy. Early in the evening it had appeared that there were no enemy in Hamich, but during the night, tanks and troops had begun to move in.

A reconnaissance indicated the possibility of getting into the town despite the fact that it would now be defended. The plan now was to attack at about 0800 on the following morning, the 17th of November.

The Third Battalion was to remain in position on the left flank until the 47th Infantry had taken Gressenich which was to the left rear of the 16th's forward elements. That town would have to fall before it would be safe to withdraw this flank battalion.

At 0420 in the morning, Lt. Col. Driscoll reported to Regimental S-3: "After checking "C" and "B" Companies, the situation doesn't look too good. Very doubtful if we can push in there in the morning. They have over-run a machine gun position where "C" Company is now. The enemy are within 20 feet of him. The enemy has just stopped and has not been driven off. I was up there myself so I know what the situation is. I'm afraid that we will get pushed out of there in the morning unless I can get some help. "B" Company had practically a platoon wiped out there. I would like to push "I" Company up there now to help in the morning for the thrust which is almost certain to come. It doesn't look as though I can go into the town right away. The matter of the town can be taken care of any time. We practically control it by fire and it is pretty well destroyed anyway. . . . . As near as I can tell "C" Company has 20 litter cases and plenty of walking wounded.

Despite the pressure from the enemy, plans went ahead for the seizure of Hamich during the day. By 1350 in the afternoon, Col. Gibb was able to report to Division: "Troops just took off for Hamich, but they are taking a terrific pounding. Our artillery support has been good, I couldn't ask for any better. We got 5 mediums, 2 lights and 2 TD's up to Driscoll. Half-tracks are doing the ammunitions work." (General Huebner) Keep shoving and wiggling. Either we are going to break or the Boche is going to break. I am not going to bother you. Go whenever you can. You may get a counter attack down the road from Heistern. (Col. Gibb) Yes, sir, I expect that. (General Huebner) Artillery should be able to take care of that.

At 1405 — Col. Driscoll to Col. Gibb — The companies are all receiving heavy mortar and artillery fire. Enemy has about 5 tanks in Hamich. Our tanks have been unable to work towards town due to mud in fields and direct fire from Point 48. (NW of Hamich) "A" Company has a few men on the outskirts of Hamich. We are having trouble evacuating wounded. The approximate strength of the companies — "A" — 115, "B" — 70 and "C" — 60.

At 1530: Capt. Clark reported: "Capt. Briggs was killed and Lt: Lycas in command of "C" Company. "A" Company and a platoon of mediums are tied in to take town on the left of woods. They have been hit by artillery, mortar and small arms fire. . . . They have been under continuous mortar and artillery fire since going into positions yesterday. No let up. They need extra medical supplies. Even with extra litter bearers they can't keep up with casualties. Company "C" has to have replacements tonight or they can't hold the ground. There are enemy fortifications in and around buildings in Hamich. The town is on high ground overlooking exit from woods. They can't take the town, someone else will have to go there as they are very badly shot up. Third Battalion is getting in bad shape. Recommend using all of Third, if at all.

At 1731: General Huebner to Col. Gibb. — How are things now? (Col.Gibb) We are in the process of repelling a counter-attack with our First Battalion now. They are coming down from the north from the tip of the woods. I committed "I" Company to help out. We are firing one round every two minutes of 155 mm concrete-busting shells. We have to move out of the edge of the town because of the shelling. Starting to lay new wire by a different route this afternoon. They are laying plenty of artillery in. I don't know where they get it all. (General Huebner) We will put the whole division artillery in front of you in the morning, and lay a concentration for you. I will use Corps Artillery, too, if necessary We are losing good men, and we don't want to lose them in vain.

At 0800 the following morning the Third Battalion pushed out for Hamich. Shortly after 1000 "K" and "L" Companies were in the town. Sharing it with them were an undetermined number of enemy infantry and 3 Tiger tanks. Six more Mark VI's were observed coming down the ridge from the northeast accompanied by infantry apparently to effect a relief of the town.

The Third Battalion, 8th Infantry was attached to CT 16 during the morning to protect the regiment's rear. Initially it was moved into an assembly area south of Schevenhutte. Divisional orders provided for its use as a rear protective element to prevent the necessity of dropping off any of the regiment's attacking companies. Every man of the regular Combat Team was needed for offensive, rather than defensive, action.

The Germans were putting up a furious defense throughout the area being attacked by the 16th and adjacent units. Not only was their ground defense stubborn, but their action against our planes exacted its price. The I & R OP, reporting at 1350, said: "Our planes were dive bombing in the vicinity of 51 (a point of woods 1000 yards northeast of Hamich) on enemy tanks. One tank was set on fire, also did some close-in dive bombing on slope northeast of Gressenich. Two bombs were very close and they set something on fire. Two of our planes were shot down. One pilot bailed out in enemy territory. Planes fell near Wurselen. The other pilot is believed to have failed to bail out."

During the afternoon, the Second Battalion, starting from the southwestern edge of Hamich attacked northwest towards the wooded hill 232 in the face of small arms and artillery fire.

Reporting at 1513, the Third Battalion had a TD and two tanks knocked out, had accounted for three enemy tanks and three 88's, and said that casualties had run considerably higher than should have been the case.

The Second Battalion had taken Hill 232 within an hour and a half. Artillery fire had landed to its rear and the small arms fire from the enemy had not delayed the battalion. One tank was knocked out and the tanks withdrew temporarily, re-formed and continued with the attacking troops. Shortly after going into position, according to the I & R OP, the battalion became engaged in a machine gun duel with troops in the NW edge of Hamich. It appeared that the Second and Third Battalions were fighting each other.

"C" Company continued to be pounded again on this day, the 18th. Late in the afternoon a counterattack consisting of foot troops and tanks pounded down towards the heavily depleted company. At 1840, the First Battalion sent word to the Regimental Commander that "C" had had to fall back. One platoon of "A" Company had been sent up to help. TD's were also sent forward.

As late as 1840 Hamich, itself, had not been completely cleared. The enemy remaining in the town were putting up the most stubborn fight.

In a little over an hour, the pressure had lessened on "C" Company and had been transferred to a point between "K" and "L" Companies. At 2030, Lt. Col. Horner said, "The situation is not so good. Enemy has more infantry from point 38 (to the rear of Hamich) swinging down between "K" and "L" Companies now. 5 tanks and TD's knocked out. We are firing time fire over point 38. Some of our fire is falling on "C" Company."

At 2112: "The enemy tanks evidently came down on "K" Company from the northeast. We only have two TD's and one tank left."

The artillery ammunition situation was bad. Fire was needed in the worst way on the counterattack, yet the supply was so low that it was used with extreme reluctance. 5 tanks and 200 infantry got into the town. After three hours, the infantry had been driven out, but the tanks remained. At 0415 Lt. Col. Horner, talking to Col. Gibb, said, "The situation up in Hamich is not too good. We've got "K" Company up forward in the town, nearly 75 yards north of point 38. Company "L's" left flank was overrun, they can account for only fifty men. AT guns are up there now and are going into position on the south of the town. I plan on using four tanks from the First Battalion. People are screaming for bazooka ammunition and bazookas. We are getting it up to them.

One man (Pfc. Carmen Turchiarelli, "K" Company) fired a bazooka from a second story window and put the round through the turret of a Mark VI. Second Battalion's situation as far as communication is concerned, is a little worse. If anything develops in the morning I can't guarantee anything. Have somebody ready in case."

An hour later, another counter-attack was coming in on "C", "K" and "L" Companies. The attack was handled with considerable loss to the enemy and some more casualties among the defenders.

At 0800 on the 19th, "B" and "C" Companies were down to 30 men each. "I" and "A" had about 90 each. The Second Battalion had also lost rather heavily during the preceding 24 hours, having had 40 to 60 casualties.

During the day plans were put into effect to renew the attack toward the northwest. The Second Battalion, working with a battalion of the 47th Infantry set out in the afternoon after the Third had fought all morning to finish clearing Hamich.

An idea of the ferocity of the fighting during the preceding few days may be had from Col. Gibb's conversation with the Divisional Commander, "I will need about 500 more replacements. We had 491 evacuated, between 120 and 125 killed. I am hurt for leaders. In "B" Company we have only two officers and 32 men left, "C" Company has 3 officers and 35 men."

The Second Battalion reached its objectives for the day, suffering some casualties but not as many as in the few days just past.

On the 20th of November, the Second and Third started pushing forward again. The attack was going almost due north with the right flank of the third, which was on the right of the regimental front, just to the west of Heistern.

The resistance continued fierce with many more casualties the cost of an advance which saw both battalions reaching points only 200 or 300 yards short of objectives. Late at night heavy artillery started dropping about a round a minute on the Second Battalion. More casualties resulted. It was difficult to remove the wounded, a litter carry of 800—1000 yards being necessary.

Continuing the attack on the 21st, the Second and Third Battalions moved into position to be ready for a concerted attack with the 18th on the following day.

The next morning, the 23rd, the Third Battalion attacked initially with two companies abreast in conjunction with the attack of CT 18 on the right. The attack was halted 400 yards short of the high ground which was the objective. The Second Battalion moved into a forward assembly area preparatory to attacking in the morning. The First Battalion which had been reorganizing and recuperating from its heavy losses around Hamich, moved to an assembly area west of Heistern to act as regimental reserve.

During the attack, "L" Company was hit very hard by artillery. It's commanding officer Capt. Cutler was wounded and the company in general so badly cut up as to render it ineffective.

"I" Company was moved in to help out the hard-hit attacking companies. A concerted attack on Hill 204 was repulsed with heavy losses to the battalion when the Germans called their artillery in on their own positions.

During this time, the Second Battalion was maneuvering to hit the hill from the left. However, no advance was possible and the Battalion went into position defensively for the night. During the night a counterattack hit the Third Battalion on the hill, but was repulsed with a heavy artillery concentration. Late in the afternoon the remnants of "K" and "L" Companies had fought their way into a castle near the hilltop which the enemy had been using for an observation post. For the next three days, this small force held out against repeated, determined efforts to retake the building. One counterattack was beaten off that night when fire was called in on the building itself. Three enemy tanks were burned. The attackers were in so close that the commander of the lead tank was killed by a rifleman at point-blank range.

On the 24th, the Second Battalion moved up on the left, suffering fairly heavy losses but reaching the assigned objectives.

The plan for the 25th was to send "E" Company through the castle position which was held by remnants of "K", "L", and "M" Companies in an attack to the north.

The attack went off as scheduled, meeting heavy artillery fire all morning and into the afternoon when it had progressed well into the woods beyond the castle. The enemy had been using a great deal of artillery and mortars for days past and when infantry didn't confront the Americans, casualties still mounted from the terrific amount of shellfire. The Second Battalion was hit heavily during the day. "I" Company from the Third had 20 wounded, which further depleted the already seriously reduced unit.

Further woods clearing went on on the 26th. The Second Battalion was doing the work here. "E" Company was ordered to the east in the afternoon to secure the right flank of the 47th Infantry.

The First Battalion relieved the Second on the following day. Contact with the enemy was maintained. Late at night "A" Company was on one side of a hill with the Germans just over the crest. The two forces were so close together that they lobbed hand grenades at each other.

On the 28th, the situation remained much the same with only patrol actions occurring. Late in the day, a message came down to the 16th from the commanding officer of Divisional Artillery; "This last couple of weeks has been the toughest war that I have ever seen. I am especially proud of that outfit of yours. It takes real he men to crawl into their holes and call their own artillery down on top of their heads. You have done a grand job and I am proud as hell of all of you."

On the 29th, "A" Company went after two bunkers in its area. A stubbornly resisting enemy held out for a considerable period until almost everyone was killed or wounded before surrendering.

A First Battalion patrol got into Luchem at night. The town did not appear to be held in force although a party of Germans was encountered which forced the patrol's withdrawal.

While the regiment had suffered heavily during the preceding couple of weeks, the enemy had paid even more dearly for his attempt to hold off the attacking Americans. In addition to his dead and wounded, who were considerably in excess of those of the 16th, if indications were correct, he had lost 810 prisoners to CT 16.

For the first two days of December there was no change in the positions of the regiment. There was no rest for the reserve battalion, the Second. It immediately plunged into training — squad and platoon problems with some extended order drill. Casualties during the latter part of October and November had been so great that replacements outnumbered the experienced men and vigorous training was a necessity to bring the recruits up to fighting pitch.

On the 3rd, the First Battalion jumped off for Luchem. By 0810, "A" and "B" Companies were in town. They had managed to get 4 medium tanks and 4 TD's in with them which were helping in the task of clearing the town. Once again as had happened so many times recently, the companies were encountering paratroopers — hard, arrogant fighters who resisted with exxtreme courage and fanaticism. At 1000 "B" Company had cleared its area and was in position, although "A" was still fighting. Over a hundred prisoners were taken during the morning.

At 1105, "A" Company was still fighting with five houses still remaining to be cleared and casualties were mounting. 12 or 13 men had been hit and the company was running into trenches and covered shelters from which the Germans kept up a heavy fire. Tanks were moved in on these positions but it was more than another hour before they were cleared and 30 more prisoners taken.

The 4th of December was fairly quiet except for a small counterattack which hit the First Battalion late in the afternoon. This was handled with competence and dispatch. Heavy casualties were inflicted and a few prisoners taken.

That night, the process of relieving the CT began. The First Battalion was out before midnight. The next morning, December 5th, the entire CT was in the process of being relieved and pulled out, heading through Stolberg, Korneilmunster and down the road to Rotgen. The relief took the greater part of the day. The regiment was to operate under V Corps, although still under Divisional adminisrative control, in VII Corps.

The regiment went into position, relieving the 60th Infantry in the vicinity of Lammersdorf. The outfit which had been holding the positions reported that early in the evening the enemy had played music, followed by propaganda on a large speaker. The 16th got no music, the Germans switching tactics from soft persuasion to the more convincing tune of artillery and mortar fire.

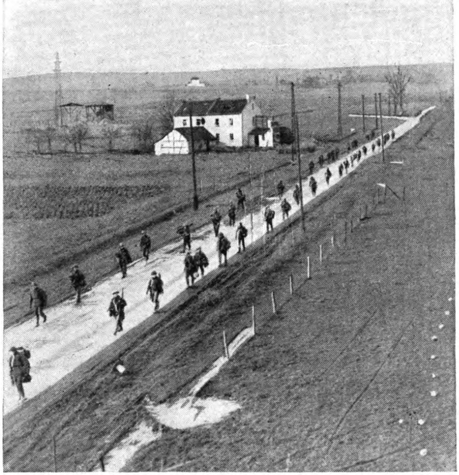
December 7th was spent getting into positions more completely. It was a quiet day with not much artillery or mortar fire falling on the organization — a change from the terrible shelling which had hit the 16th so consistently in the area around Hamich.

Snow started to fall the next day. Enemy activity was limited to a little artillery fire as the ground and trees turned white. Rumors of a relief began on the 8th. By the 11th, it was apparent that the regiment was to be pulled out of line, and moved back to Herve for an extended rest. It would be the first complete surcease from fighting for almost two months. During that time, CT 16 had been engaged in some of the bitterest campaigning of the war. Casualties had been very high, shell fire had decimated companies; counterattacks had taken heavy tolls; it had been a time of terrible battle a time to try the soul of a great combat unit. Through the days and nights of fierce battle to the south and east of Aachen: through the costly, unrelenting fight for the Hamich area; through the frightful shelling with the terrific losses from tree bursts in the Hurtgen forests around Hamich, the 16th had continued to press forward, or if unable to advance, to hold its dearly purchased ground.

If ever a regiment deserved a rest, it was this prime fighting outfit.

Once again housed in buildings, the process of rehabilitation and recuperation began. Passes were given to the Divisional Rest Area, new clothing issued and general relaxation began. While in this area, the first men from the regiment were sent back to the United States on rotation. These were all survivors of the African and Sicilian campaigns — men with fine combat records and a long time in the lines. It seemed that the rest period was to be fairly lengthy. However, the plans for recuperation did not reckon with the capabilities of the Germans.

Moving out. "Doggies" jump off in another of the interminable series of attacks which took the 16th through more than 30 months of battle.



While the desperate resistance had been going on in November, the German General Staff had been piling up an attacking force, getting ready for a great attempt to smash back the Americans, to annihilate the forces that stood in the path of a great breakthrough. It was an offensive so ambitious that it looked to the eventual recapture of Paris now hundreds of miles away. It was the tremendous offensive which became know, variously as the "Breakthrough", the "Battle of the Bulge", or the "Battle of the Ardennes Salient."

On December 16th, word came to get ready for a hurried move. A breakthrough had been effected to the south by the powerful German thrust. A thinly held American line had been pierced, shattered; the enemy was to the rear of two divisions, smashing straight through in a mighty endeavor to wipe out the forces which had been engaged in holding too much territory with too few troops.

On the 17th, the CT was alerted; on the 18th it moved from the vicinity of Herve to positions in the vicinity of Robertville, Belgium, with a mission to defend to the southwest. Paratroops had been dropped along the route of march and the regiment moved with the expectation of having to fight to reach its assigned area.

The move of 22 miles was made without an attack and the Combat Team went into position. No one knew where other units were located.

The enemy had overrun so many positions that it was impossible to determine whether localities were held by friendly or enemy troops except through patrols. The result was that extensive patrolling was initiated.

One patrol went into Walk, across a lake from the Third Battalion, the Second Battalion patrolled into Malmedy, several thousand yards to the Southwest. (This was the site of the ghastly massacre of American prisoners by SS troops.)

In the face of the desperate situation, a note of humor is detected in a conversation between Divisional G-3 and the Regimental Executivn officer. The G-3 asked; "What is in Weywertz? The Executive replied, "We have a patrol going there. (G-3) What ever is there is attached to you — excluding Jerries."

The First Battalion contacted the Belgians at Lonfaye, and Xhoffraix. No enemy were found in any of the towns around the area, except in Waimes where Lt. Col. Horner encountered a pair of paratroopers who had captured the staff — doctors and nurses of the 47th Field Hospital. The Colonel and his driver took the hard-bitten pair prisoner and freed their American captives. Later in the day when tanks and TD's were sent into the town, a few members of the First SS Panzer Division were found there. They were killed or captured.

Probing and feeling for the enemy, the 16th met none in any force until late in the afternoon of the 19th when "E" Company ran into resistance between Faymonville, towards which the company was moving, and Waimes.

Ambushes were posted along the roads at night to intercept and destroy any attempted German push up through the 16th's territory.

During the evening, a force of about twenty Germans tried to penetrate the line held by "I" Company. They were driven off and swung towards "K" which met and also repelled them.

The town of Faymonville, patrols had found, was swarming with enemy, equipped with many tanks. Another hazard which had cost other organizations many men and ground and which had disrupted the entire American defense in the path of the German thrust was the fact that Germans were wearing American uniforms and using American equipment. The knowledge that everyone, not personally known to an individual, must be considered suspect had a demoralizing effect. The 16th was careful to warn its men of the possibilities of German deception. Forewarned, they were in better condition to stop any possible depredations of this sort than were those units which were caught unawares.

While by comparison with the activity around Hamich, the night of the 19th was fairly quiet, men were kept tense by a succession of minor incidents. An idea of the night's activities can be gained from a report

Maj. James L. Baldwin, Regimental, S-3, joined the 16th Infantry from the 395th Infantry of the 99th Division, in July 1945. Prior to service with the 395th Infantry, Maj. Baldwin had served with the 137th Infantry, 134th Infantry, and 35th Division Headquarters.

to S-3 from the Second Battalion: "Fire coming into the left but none into our area. There has been some artillery or mortar around "I" Company and some in front of "F" Company. The artillery hasn't been too heavy around "I" Company – a few rounds every few minutes. We are getting organized fairly well and are fairly well buttoned up.

S-3 asked, "Is there friendly artillery going into Faymonville?"

"They say it is pretty heavy. There is a high tension wire down out front of us that is causing us some concern. There is a fence out front which is electrified. Wish we could get rid of it. When the men go out to destroy it, they are silhouetted and draw fire.

S-3, "What have you got tor road cover?"

"A 57 and some stuff behind them. We are putting out mines. I am sending in an overlay. . . Everything is pretty well buttoned up."

Lt. Col. Grant to Col. Gibb, "Everything is all right, but we do not have a reserve."

Col. Gibb: "Driscoll (First Battalion) is coming in, in back of you in the morning.

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Lt. Col. Grant, "I am concerned about our left flank. Shelby is on the left and Karas on the right, going towards Faymonville. We are moving the minefields up in front of our people. Karas is not up to the road junction but about 150 yards from there. Had some enemy fire around Karas' area."

Later, the Second Battalion again reported, "E" Company is in contact. Have rifle fire every now and then. Can hear enemy talking. There is no estimate of enemy strength. There is some machine gun fire coming in and our machine guns are firing. The enemy artillery, about a dozen rounds, is battery fire. It is not bothering us but is in the vicinity."

Near midnight, "I" Company began to have serious trouble in one of its platoon areas. About fifty Germans came in on the platoon. They rushed the platoon CP, a house, firing bazookas at ranges of no more than 30 feet. Two tanks were ordered in to take care of the attack. Many Germans were reported being killed. At the same time "L" Company was having an attempted penetration. Both attacks were beaten off with only slight losses to the 16th.

A 16th Infantry half-track plows its way through a muddy road in the Hurtgen, Forest. The fighting in this area was among the worst the regiment experienced during the war.

Late in the afternoon of the 20th, a group of the enemy tried to work into positions held by "A" Company. They worked up an open draw towards the company and then split off, part of the force advancing towards positions held by "I" Company. Tanks also started to move towards "I" Company, which was ready for them with 57's and four 90 mm TD's which were hastily moved forward. A couple of hours later there were neither tanks nor infantry within 500 yards of the Third Battalion, artillery fire having driven off the Germans.

The 16th frequently added to its T/0 equipment with captured German materiel. Here is a German half-track which "I" Company used as an ammo-carrier for several hundred miles before it finally gave up the ghost after the Weser River crossing.

The enemy continued probing at the 16th's lines all during the night. It appeared that he was trying to find out what was in front of him. An attack seemed to be a likely possibility to follow these attempts to gain information. One patrol worked in close enough to loose "burp" gun fire on an "H" Company machine gun position. One Company "H" man was killed and another wounded.

On the morning of December 21st, the 26th Infantry received a strong infantry and tank attack. The 16th was expecting something of the same sort, perhaps the following day. Indications pointed to the possibility of two battalions of infantry and a tank battalion hitting the regiment.

Patrolling extensively and laying thousands of mines, the regiment was prepared for a heavy assault. Once during the day, 40 enemy came into "L" Company's positions. Visibility was very poor and it seemed likely that they had lost their way, were not actually attacking, but merely trying to find the way to Faymonville.

Early in the evening a group of German parachute troops moved in on a Third Battalion OP. 15 were killed, a couple taken prisoner and the remainder driven off.

It was an unusual situation that existed during this period. Americans were destroying American equipment and taking prisoners in American uniform. The 30th Division took a PW wearing captain's bars and carrying papers with an enlisted man's serial number. It knocked out an M-8 armored car, Sherman tank, 2—2½ ton American trucks and 10 other American vehicles.

On the 22nd, Germans continued to come down the railroad tracks towards "L" Company. This was the same route used the day before. As on the previous day they were driven back with losses. It seemed queer that they should attempt the same thing that had failed the day before.

Capt. Karl E. Wolf, "I" Company commander during combat, he served successively as S-3, Executive Officer, and Commanding Officer of the Third Battalion, which he left in January, 1946.

That Germans were still wandering around to the rear of the established lines, was a virtual certainty. An anti-aircraft battery reported that two men, one wearing the uniform of a lieutenant the other a T/5's stripes, and both wearing First Division patches, had stopped to question civilians in their area. When troops from the anti-aircraft unit approached, they departed hastily. Civilians insisted they were Germans.

The news of the massacre of American captives at Malmedy had come down to the regiment. Other atrocity stories indicated that the Germans would stop at nothing to make this final great effort succeed. Orders came from corps that all troops forward of Division Rear would carry gas masks at all times. Since the enemy had gone so far in violating the rules of warfare it did not seem improbable that he would stop at the use of gas.

For the next couple of weeks the 16th played an unfamiliar role. Its action was almost entirely defensive. From a relentless offensive machine the 16th had switched to a holding force. It had been put on line to keep the Germans from expanding their salient to the north. It succeeded.

Night after night, the regiment wired and mined itself in. It patrolled, maintaining contact with the enemy. It suffered some casualties from mortar and artillery fire. It lost men in its patrol actions and it exacted toll from the enemy who from time to time attempted infiltrations in patrol strength sometimes, and sometimes in greater numbers.

At night it kept artillery fire on enemy outposts and strongpoints. In the daytime it directed artillery and mortar fires on enemy convoys, on tanks and on personnel who incautiously exposed themselves.

Early in this period, an attack in great strength was anticipated from the dreaded SS units which had forced the initial breakthrough. The first night in position, as has been noted previously, "I" Company was hit by a strong enemy force, possibly consisting of two companies, only twenty minutes after going into position. Had the attack come in a few minutes earlier it would have caught the company on the road and possibly effected a breakthrough of the regimental front.

As it was, the fighting was at very close range and extremely furious for about three hours. "I" Company was on one side of the road, the enemy was in the ditch on the other side. Small groups of Germans worked their way across the road and into houses held by the First Platoon of the company. It was "touch and go" until tanks could be brought up the road, flanked by infantry, and sprayed the ditch with machine gun and HE fire.

This was the only sizeable encounter in the two weeks in the position.

Most of the enemy strength seemed to be concentrated in the town of Faymonville. Although the American artillery pounded the town frequently it continued to be an assembly point for many Germans, possibly because it was a center for roads leading from the east, west and south.

Enemy use of Allied equipment — trucks, planes and tanks and their wearing of Allied uniforms continued to be a source of danger. An enemy-flown American artillery liaison plane directed fire successfully on the Second Battalion for several consecutive nights.

Another source of trouble, probably brought about by the general confusion that pervaded the area was the frequent bombings and strafings by Allied planes, both American and British. Air Support Party seemed unable to do anything about this for several days. It reached the point where the ground troops would willingly, in fact had to be restrained from, firing on their own planes. Their feeling in the matter was, of course, easily understandable.

It was uncomfortable warfare. Snow had started to fall a few days after the regiment had gone into position. Soon it was deep enough to hamper foot movement. Americans and Germans alike blossomed out in snow capes, in white blankets, in bed sheets --- anything to help them blend in with the white background.

Christmas came and went — a day like all the others — one of patrol actions, of defense against enemy patrols, of enduring artillery and mortar fires from the enemy.

On into January the same conditions existed. In other parts of the bulge American infantrymen, American armor and American airpower were smashing away at the German salient, hacking their way through it from the sides to the relief of besieged units within its borders, blunting its head, slowly but inexorably breaking the back of the Germans' last great offensive operation.

On the night of January 4—5, the First Battalion moved a strong patrol out to a point about 400 yards due north of Faymonville. It came in on the rear of a German outpost, went in with knives and captured the entire force of six men. After sending them back to the battalion, it remained in the position to take the relief when it came out.

However, on the following night, virtually the same thing seems to have happened to an outpost from the 16th's Second Battalion. Three men, who had been warned that the enemy would attempt to take their position were missing when daylight came. The only trace of them was one of their helmets which was in the hole when a search party went out to investigate.

A platoon outpost, north of Faymonville, operated by the First Battalion was attacked by twenty enemy on the morning of the 5th. One American was killed, and one wounded, but the position was held, the attack costing the Germans five killed and several wounded as well as two prisoners.

Maj. Herbert C. Allen, a Cannon Co. commander with the 395th Infantry, 99th Division, in combat. Joined the 16th, July, 1945. Served as Regimental S-2.

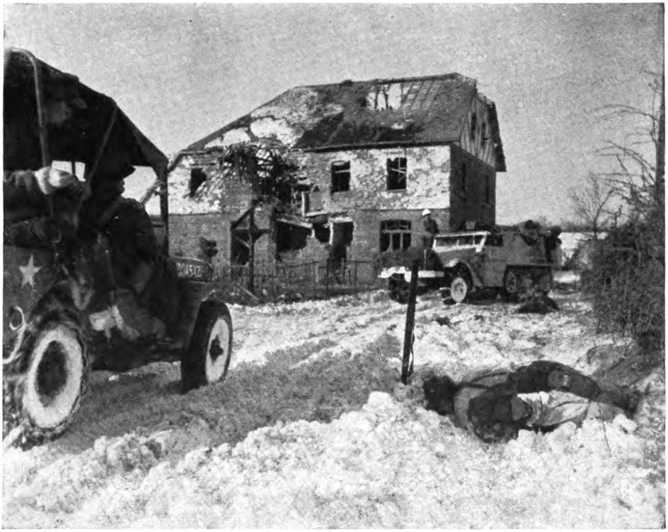
Maj. John W. Brooks, served with the 16th Infantry throughout the war. He was Regimental S-4 at the time of departing for leave in the States, April, 1946.

The snowfall increased and by the night of the 8th, the Second Battalion was calling for a bull-dozer to keep the road open in its area near Waimes.

The heavy snow cut patrolling to a minimum for a few davs. On the night of the 9th, the Third Battalion sent a patrol out to retrieve the body of Lt. McLoughlin of "L" Company who had been killed a few nights before in a skirmish for a railway switch house to the north of Favmonville. The same night, a patrol from "G" Company came under friendly artillery fire and a sergeant in the group was killed.

Capt. Carl K. Giles, Jr., was Regimental S-1 at the time of his return to the United States in the summer of 1945. Capt. Giles, as a First Lt. with "K" Company, won the DSC.

Capt. Irvin S. Thrasher, Regimental S-1 for a time during the summer of 1945, joined the 16th in a transfer from the 395th Infantry, 99th Division, in July, 1945.



This is the sort of weather conditions the 16th endured during the "Battle of the Bulge". This is a roadside scene near Faymonville, Belgium. A First Battalion man lies dead in the ditch. A German prisoner rides in the jeep. January 16, 1945.

The situation remained much the same until the 14th of January when the period of defensive waiting was scheduled to come to an end and the 16th was to attack once again. However, on the 14th, increased German activity caused a postponement of the attack.

Finally on the morning of the 15th, the long-awaited attack jumped off. The Third and First Battalions were committed with the First driving for the town of Faymonville and the Third going after the ground slightly to the northeast of the town. Within an hour, one platoon of "I" Company was in position but the remainder of the company was having a fight getting into some buildings near the objective. To their right, "L" Company was progressing more slowly although with every appearance of ultimate success.

In the First Battalion, things did not go so well. "B" Company worked into the north edge of Faymonville where it proceeded to fight from house to house. However, "A" Company was pinned down outside of town so completely that men could not even raise their heads, so heavy was the fire. Two hours later the same situation existed with "A" Company becoming disorganized. Both battalions had by this time committed their tanks. Both had lost one tank in minefields.

"B" Company got one tank into Faymonville and proceeded to work into the town.

Men of the 16th lie in wait for German paratroopers being driven out of woods in early stages of "Battle of the Bulge". Dec. 19, 1945.

In the meantime, the Third Battalion had committed "K" Company in an attack on "I" Company's left flank which put "K" on the extreme left of the regiment between "I" and the 18th Infantry.

At 1112, "A" Company was reorganizing and the attached platoon of TD's was moving up to support it in a continuation of the attack.

By noon, the Third Battalion reported 12—15 wounded, 2 killed. Each of the First Battalion's assault companies, "A" and "B" had 16 casualties. The houses in Faymonville were rather widely spaced and the attacking force suffered losses every time it advanced from one to another. When night came, the battalion had lost 70 men and the town was not yet completely cleared. On their left, the Third Battalion had continued its advance until it was on a line running east from Faymonville. However, its casualties, too, were comparable to those of the First. Many of these losses were attributable to the fact that the regiment to the east had not followed the original plan of moving up at the same time as the 16th. This left the 16th to bear all the pressure of enemy resistance.

When morning came, Companies "B" and "C" moved on through Faymonville, searching houses, meeting little resistance — a change from the day before. At 0900 the town was reported cleared.

As soon as Faymonville was cleared, the Second Battalion moved through the town with orders to take Schoppen to the southeast, or if that were impossible, to seize the high ground west of the town.

Progress was made until about half the distance between Faymonville and Schoppen had been covered. At this point the battalion was in some woods. Fire came in on them from three sides and by-passed enemy caused further trouble from the rear. Fire increased to the point where it was eventually necessary to withdraw to the rear of the woods and hold up for the night.

The regiment in general continued to hold up on the 17th.

On the 18th the Second Battalion continued to hold. The Third remained in reserve and the First pushed on to the south. "B" Company ran into particularly heavy resistance. When night came, the First was on an east-west line some 1000 yards to the west of Schoppen. On the following day, the 19th, the Third Battalion set out for the town of Schoppen.

With "I" and "K" Companies proceeding abreast the battalion set out in the worst weather encountered by the 16th during all its campaigning in World War II. Snow was knee deep on the level and drifted to two and three times that depth where the wind could get at it. To make matters worse, it continued to snow so hard that it assumed the proportions of a blizzard. Clouds of snow made observation impossible. The only vehicles that could attempt to travel were the small tracked "weasels", horse-drawn sleds borrowed from the Belgian natives, and tanks.

Walking through the drifts was exhausting in the extreme and the troops halted frequently to rest. Heavily laden weapons company men with their burdens of mortars and machine guns were hard put to make any progress through the deep snow.

While it was wearing on the troops, the snow did give the attackers the advantage of surprise. So bad were conditions that the Germans were not only unable to observe the advance but it was unlikely that they even suspected an attack was being made.

Outposts were surprised and quickly eliminated. Some resistance was encountered in the town but most of the enemy were holed up in houses and cellars, unprepared to fight. Long before noon the town had been cleared and "K" Company had moved out 500 yards to the high ground south of Schoppen.

The condition of the men was terrible. Wherever possible men were in houses, but hundreds had to remain in the open. Wet clothes froze on them, there was a shortage of blankets and it was impossible to keep socks dry. Men were coming down with bad colds, were developing

Bed sheets and snow suits camouflage members of the 16th infantry as they advance on a narrow road near Faymonville, Belgium. January 16, 1945.

Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Company "L's" captured German half-track transports supplies to men on line, near Schoppen, Belgium. January 22, 1945.

trench feet, and when neither of these two illnesses occurred they were so miserable in general that their continued determination to fight is one of the finest evidences of the quality of these American infantrymen.

While the Third Battalion was taking Schoppen, the First Battalion was pressing its attack to the south, seizing the high ground north of Elbertingen thus protecting the left flank of the 23rd Infantry.

Simultaneously the Second Battalion pushed to the south and reached the river line running southwest out of Schoppen.

During the night the Second Battalion called for a snow plow to open roads so that chow jeeps could get through with breakfast for the troops. Weather conditions were intolerable. The engineers working with bulldozers and tankdozers worked all night to open the roads. When morning came vehicles were stuck everywhere and almost all roads were blocked. Nevertheless, the Second Battalion pushed out to the south and the Third went after a group of houses south of Schoppen.

Replacements came in during this two or three day period. They were, for the most part, transfers from anti-aircraft and other units with little infantry background. Among them were few if any non-com-

Little Belgian village of Schoppen in a view taken from a plane. This tiny town was stubbornly defended but fell quickly when Company "I" surprised its defenders by attacking through a blinding blizzard.

missioned officers to replace the large number that had been lost in the recent campaigning. However, despite their lack of experience, they began to fit into their companies. Frostbite cases increased with the Second Battalion alone losing 20 men from this cause on the 21st.

For several days, the regiment concentrated on improving its positions and maintaining contact with the enemy. Outposts were pushed to the south and small groups of enemy cleared from areas to the front of the battalions.

During the night of the 23rd—24th, the Third Battalion moved out to the south. Before daylight, "K" Company was in position on a line running west from Moderscheid. Later in the morning, the Second Battalion pushed forward so that its left flank contacted the right of the Third.

Sgt. Lionel Pender and Pvt. Jerome Dicken, "I" Company, examine German "bazooka" left behind by enemy when Belgian town of Schoppen fell to the 16th.

Plans were begun during the day for the taking of Amel which lay some 2500 yards south of the First Battalion. The move of the other two battalions together with the southward movement of the 18th Infantry had pinched off Moderscheid. This left the way open for an advance towards Mirfeld as well as Amel. Tentative plans put the Second Battalion in regimental reserve with the Third scheduled to go into Mirfeld and the First into Amel. A divisional plan had suggested a combined infantry-armor assault on Amel, with the 7th Armored Division cooperating with the 16th. Col. Gibb rejected this plan believing that the experienced infantry troops could do a better and less costly job than any combination with the armored.

First Lts. William N. Jackson and Leeward W. Stockwell examine rifles and panzerfausts left behind by the enemy when they were forced out of Schoppen Belgium. Both officers wore the DSC.

Although the original plan did not call for the Third Battalion to attack until the 26th, late in the afternoon of January 25th a patrol reported Mirfeld to be either unoccupied or only lightly held. A quick decision was made to go into the town that day. "I" and "L" Companies were loaded on tanks went through Moderscheid, out the ridge road northeast of Mirfeld then turned right to enter the town without opposition.

The same afternoon, a platoon was dispatched from "B" Company to investigate Amel. While there was opposition, it was light and early in the evening it was in the hands of the First Battalion.

Prisoners taken during these two or three days were lower in morale than any that had been encountered for a long time. Many of them were of the opinion that the war would end in a very few weeks.

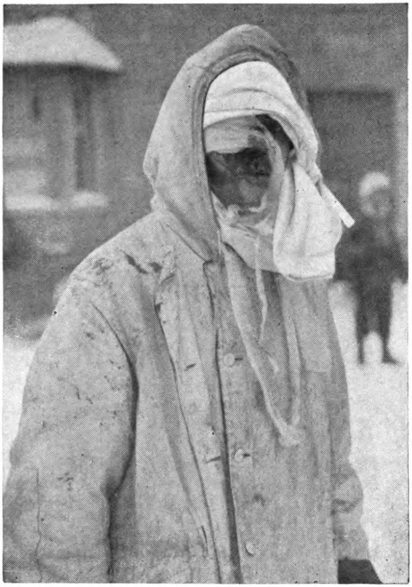
Enemy remaining in the woods to the northeast of Mirfeld constituted a threat to the Third Battalion's left rear. On the night of January 27th the battalion went into these woods to clear out the Germans. Since they were not there in great strength, the enemy was on the point of surrendering soon after the battalion entered the woods. However, friendly artillery started falling on the Americans and the attack and seizure of the enemy had to be held up more than two hours. Eventually, however, the fire stopped, the woods were cleared and 25 Germans captured.

The next day the Third Battalion found the town of Valender only lightly held and, although the 82nd Air Borne Division had planned to take the town, the Third seized it with the loss of only one man wounded.

Pfc. Ralph Berry, "M" Company, piles cases of ammunition that will be used by mortar platoon to fire into Schoppen, Belgium, prior to infantry attack. January 22, 1945.

For several days the regiment remained in position. Then, as other units moved forward, leaving the 16th in a rear area, training was undertaken. Squad problems were ordered for all rifle companies in order to train the new men in the tacties used in taking and going into position on an objective.

German soldier, wounded as 16th moved in to hold northern corner of the "Bulge."



Meanwhile, the 18th and 26th Infantry Regiments were working on the Siegfried Line trying to breach the wall the second time for the First Division. On February 2, the Third Battalion was placed on 24 hour alert for possible commitment in the 26th's zone of action.

However, the move did not eventuate and the 16th did not move until February 6th. On the 5th, Lt. Col. Woolnough was transferred to command a regiment in the 99th Division. Replacing him as Regimental Executive Officer was Lt. Col. Horner. Major Wozenski, who had been executive officer of the Second Battalion became the new commanding officer of Col. Horner's Third Battalion.

Covering territory over which they had moved in November and December, the men of the 16th were transported up through Robertville, to Eupen, Korneilmunster, Gressenich and Schevenhutte and then on to the east where the Combat Team relieved CT 13 of the 8th Division.

The new positions overlooked the Roer River. The regimental CP was in the almost completely demolished town of Kleinhau. The regimental line was centered near the town of Winden, on the Roer. Some trouble

"I" Company men ride the back of a tank as they approach the town of Schoppen, Belgium, during "Battle of the Bulge. Jan. 21, 1945.

was encountered in patrolling. The unit which had occupied the ground earlier had mined the area in front of them down to the river extremely heavily and had prepared overlays of the minefields improperly. The result was that patrols frequently stumbled into mines with resultant casualties.

On the 8th, heavy traffic caused when the 508th Parachute Regiment operating through the First Battalion area failed to follow SOP road traffic regulations, brought down heavy rocket and artillery fire which produced casualties and disrupted communications.

The Roer River had risen between two and three feet during the preceding 36 hours. This was attributed to the heavy rains of the two or three days past plus opening of sluice gates by the enemy Also, considerable fear was felt that the Germans would blow dams upriver which would flood out positions held by the 16th near the river. Precautions were taken to insure an adequate warning system should the dams go.

Road conditions were terrible. No vehicles could get through and engineers estimated that it woult take at least three days work to make them passable even for jeeps.

The bodies of two 16th infantrymen who died in the attack on Faymonville, Belgium, are watched over by a comrade. This was during "Battle of the Bulge." Jan. 16, 1945.

A very detailed study of the river, its banks, its depth, current — all information needed to effect a crossing — was made through intensive patrolling by the three battalions.

The dangerous work of clearing minefields and booby traps continued. It was particularly aggravating to be endangered by devices placed by friendly troops.

Plans were made to cross the river and abandoned two or three times when the river continued to rise. Upriver, the Americans controlled one end of the dam which if blown would flood the entire valley while the Germans held the other end. As long as the Germans were in possession of that end there was always the possibility that it would be blown although indications pointed to their being satisfied with the effect created by the sluice gates which they had blown open.

Several different plans for bridging the stream were proposed. Col. Grant selected several strong swimmers from his battalion who were to swim the river at night and help to pull pontoon boats across. Major Wozenski suggested a light bridge which could be built in a rear area and then brought up and floated into position.

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The dead lie before the bitterly consted village of Hamich.

Instead of bridging for the assault, the engineers proposed the use of 28 assault boats for the two leading companies after which a bridge would be thrown across for the third company of the assault battalion. The drawback to this plan was the fact that for the safe use of boats a current of 4 miles per hour was the maximum, while the Roer was sweeping along at 12.

During this time there was continual reconnaissance at night for possible bridge sites. The Second Battalion launched a training program in preparation for the river crossing. All plans, however, were held in abeyance until the river level should start to decrease.

On the 13th and 14th there was increased enemy fire with a few casualties resulting. Much of this fire was brought in by uncontrolled movement of vehicles of supporting units, engineers and other organizations, through the area during daylight hours.

It finally developed that a battalion of the 26th Infantry was to make an assault crossing in the area defended by the Third Battalion of the 16th. On February 15th, this battalion moved in and the portion of the Third which had been holding the line moved back to an assembly area in the vicinity of Kufferath.

The fields before Hamich are cleared of the dead.

The night of February 17—18, the First Battalion sent two patrols across the river in boats. This was done both in an effort to conduct a reconnaissance of the eastern bank and to test the possibilities of crossing by boat. One boat got across safely. The other, farther upstream, to the south, hung up in some trees on the flooded ground on the German side and drew fire from the enemy. One man was seriously wounded another hurt and three men did not return.

Again on the night of February 19—20, the First Battalion sent patrols across.

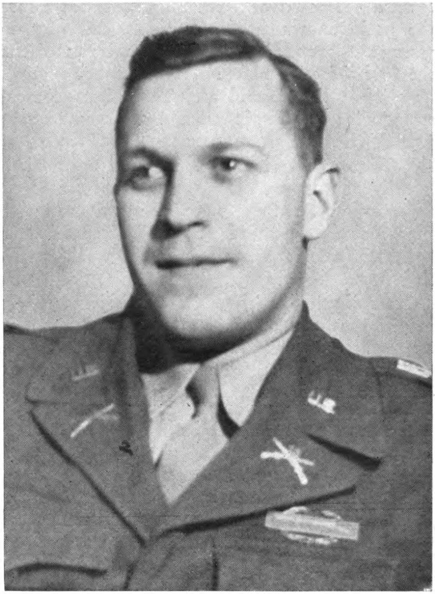
Between 0330 and 0530 on the morning of the 21st, fairly heavy artillery concentrations were fired on the Germans. This same schedule was to be followed each morning until the day of the assault crossing so that when the artillery preparation was fired on the morning of the crossing it would not tend to alert the enemy too much.

There followed a few more days of watchfulness, of waiting for the river to fall and of preparation for the coming assault. Finally, on the 24th of February, the 8th Division, to the north of the 16th made a crossing. The 8th experienced considerable difficulty, having bridges swept away by the current, boats lost and fairly heavy casualties once the first troops were across.

Plans called for one battalion of the 16th to cross in its own sector and the other two battalions to use bridges in the 8th Division sector.

During the day, plans were changed several times. Some plans had part of the regiment making assault crossings in boats, others had them crossing on bridges, but eventually the aforementioned proposal to have two battalions use the 8th Division footbridge while the remaining battalion crossed in the 16th's sector was adhered to.

During the night of the 24th—25th enemy aircraft were active, strafing and bombing along the riverfront. Because the skies were full of RAF bombers and fighters, American anti-aircraft had to hold its fire most of the night for fear of knocking down a friendly plane by mistake. The result was that the enemy flew virtually unhindered and not only caused casualties among the troops but knocked out two sections of the "Treadway" bridge which the 16th had planned to use.



Maj. George J. Heil, CO 2nd Bn., joined the regiment as a 2nd Lt., in 1940. He commanded "F" Company in Africa until severely wounded at El Guettar. Following his recovery he served with the VI Corps in Italy, performed a tour of duty in the States, then returned to the 16th in December, 1945.

CHAPTER XV

After many delays and changes in plan, the Second Battalion finally started across a bridge in the 8th Division sector near the outskirts of Duren at about 0830 hours, moving into a assembly area in the vicinity of Niederau at 0930 hours. Following them across the same bridge came the Third Battalion.

By noon, the two battalions were ready to attack to the south, toward the town of Kreuzau which was directly across the river from the positions which the regiment had occupied during the period of waiting. A wooded strongpoint southwest of the town of Stockheim was the first objective before Kreuzau itself.

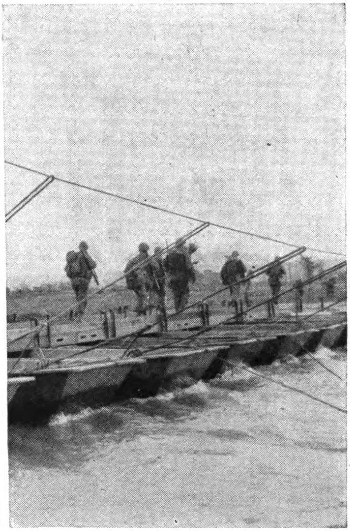
While the Second and Third Battalions were driving toward this strongpoint, clearing it out and proceeding on towards Kreuzau, the First was in reserve, initially, on the west side of the river.

The crossing had been effected under the cover of a smoke screen laid by artillery and mortars and maintained during the entire period of the crossing. At about 1230, artillery, mortars, and machine guns of the First Battalion, started pounding Kreuzau to aid the coming attack of the two assault battalions. Only weak artillery fire responded from the town.

At about 1500 hours, the bridge in the First Battalion sector was in and that unit began to cross. Meanwhile, the Second and Third were continuing to work south. "E" Company, at about that time, was running into considerable difficulty, encountering stubborn enemy who fought back from their cellar strongholds. A few minutes later, "K" and "L" companies were held up by small arms and mortar fire as well as direct fire from a high-velocity weapon. TD's couldn't cope with the situation and the Third Battalion called for tanks which were released by the Second Battalion. There was a delay in getting them up since they had to be refueled. A tank, an SP gun and many dug-in automatic weapons presented a considerable obstacle to the advance of the companies. "I" Company and the TD's attempted a flanking movement toward the east.

During this time, the Second Battalion was working rapidly south and east. By nightfall, "G" Company had reached Drove and early in the evening, the battalion held the town.

Company "M" moves across the footbridge over the Roer River, near Lendersdorf, Germany. February 25, 1945.



Machine-gunner from a rifle-company weapons platoon prepares to move down to the Roer River, near Kreuzau. Germany. February 25, 1945.

Loaded down with a multitude of equipment, 16th soldiers just prior to moving out for Roer River Crossing. Feb. 25, 1945.

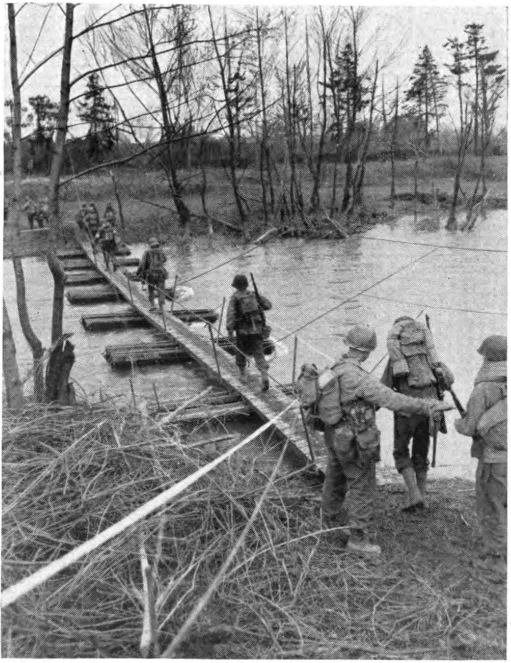
However, the Third Battalion was having rougher going. Stockheim, which was supposed to have been in the hands of the 8th Division was not clear on the south side and the enemy there were doing considerable damage to the Third.

The enemy had planted mines on every likely approach to every position to which the attacking forces were likely to advance. Casualties were suffered both among men and vehicles. When morning came, the First Battalion had lost about forty men, mostly through mine explosions.

In the morning, the Second Battalion was counter-attacked by four tanks and a company of infantry. One American TD was destroyed; the Germans lost a Mark IV tank as well as having another one damaged by a bazooka. As the counterattacking force withdrew, heavy American artillery fire increased its losses.

During the morning, General Andrus, First Division CG, told Col. Gibb that the 16th would not advance too far until the other two regiments of the division were across the river. It was expected to be 48 hours, also before the force of the Ninth Division, to the south, would

"B" Company men cross a footbridge over the Roer River, near Kreuzau. February 25, 1945.



be felt to any great extent. There would be danger in pushing the 16th out too far ahead of flank elements, even if it were possible to move against what could be a concentration of all enemy restistance in the area, in view ot the fact hat defending units would be unoccupied in areas where crossings in strength had not yet been made

However, some local advances were planned. The Second Battalion, once its counter-attack situation was cleared up, and it appeared to be well in hand by 1000 hours, would push east to Soller. Orders came down for the Second to jump-off in this attack at 1400 hours.

Early in the afternoon, the Third Battalion had pushed southeast until they were in position on a line running to the north and slightly to the front of Soller. Their advance had been only lightly opposed.

A difficult trail system and some fairly stiff resistance slowed the First and Second Battalions during the afternoon. When darkness came, they held up some 800 yards short of Soller. During the early evening,

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Lt. Col. Grant, of the Second Battalion, told Col. Gibb he planned to try for Soller. He intended, he said, to send "F" Company with 2 tanks and the attached TD's directly into the town followed up by a platoon of "G" Company with attached light tanks.

The attack pushed off at 2130 hours and half an hour later "F" Company was in town. Division ordered the 16th to be prepared to take Vetweiss the following day. Since this town was some 4000 yards to the east of Soller, it followed that Soller must be cleared and the area around the town solidly established as American ground so that the attack of the following day could have a chance of success.

Col. Gibb planned to push the First and Second Battalions all night, attacking Frangenheim, a thousand yards south of Soller, as soon as Soller itself was cleared.

"A" Company moves out through Kufferath for foot bridge across the Roer. Feb. 25, 1945.

The preceding two days had been rather costly in armor. Six out of twelve TD's had been lost and the regiment was short two tanks.

The Second Battalion controlled Soller at 0200 hours on the morning of the 27th. An hour and a half later, "B" Company, of the First, jumped off for Frangenheim. A few hours later it was cleared and the First Battalion was waiting there for relief from the 26th Infantry which was supposed to come in to cover the regiment's right flank, which up to this time had been open.

Up to this point, the regiment had had about 120 casualties since crossing the Roer.

Pfc. George Cap, Prior Lake, Minnesota, and Pvt. James McFarland, Zanesville, Ohio, Company "I" men, play cards while awaiting orders to move out on Vettweiss. February 28, 1945.

"I" Company, taking into account the difficulties that might have made the action a failure, considers Vetweiss its most successful attack. Their account of the engagement follows:

"The attack on Vettweiss may be considered as one of the most successful made by "I" Company during the war in Europe. There were losses of both personnel and armor, but an important road center was seized and a determined enemy was routed from a strongly fortified position at not too great a cost."

"It was a typical attack in that the fighting did not go as planned. Quick thinking in on-the-spot decisions made for success. There was chaos and confusion but at the same time there was good leadership and aggressive action by officers and men."

"At 0100, 27 February 1945, Capt. Karl E. Wolf, "I" Company Commander, received a warning order from the Battalion S-3 that the Third Battalion would go into an assembly area in Soller that morning and jump off for Vettweiss about noon with "I" Company mounted on all the available attached armor in the battalion. Other companies of the battalion would follow with "K" immediately behind "I" and "L" Company to be used either to help secure the town or to take a smaller village slightly to the left."

"At the company commanders meeting, the battalion commander told his CO's that the enemy had considerable mortar and artillery support. That they were dug in and that mines protected most of the approaches."

"The company was told that it would assault the town with one platoon of medium tanks, one platoon of light tanks, and one platoon of TD's. "I" Company was to secure, initially, the center portion of

16th Infantry half-track and its crew await orders to move on with the towed 57 mm anti-tank gun in Vetweiss. Infantrymen relax during lull. Note body of dead German soldier in foreground.

town. Following them, "K" Company was to enter the town, pick up the TD's and clear to the north. "L" Company it was finally decided would follow "K" into the town, pick up the medium tanks and clear to the south. However, if resistance in the town was light, then "I" was to clear the whole area and later be relieved by the other two companies.

"The Third Platoon was to ride the TD's, Second Platoon on medium tanks and the First on the lights. Headquarters personnel and mortar squads were to be divided between the two tank platoons. It was SOP in "I" Company that one light machine gun squad was permanently attached to each platoon. Because of the wide open area to be covered after leaving the protection of woods several hundred yards from Vetweiss, the company was to ride until they reached the edge of town, crossing the open area at far greater speed than would be possible on foot.

If any of the armor bogged down, and this appeared a possibility since the ground was very soggy, or if it were knocked out, the troops aboard were to dismount and continue into town on foot.

The platoons were to mount the tanks in town (Soller) and then proceed out of town in column with the TD's breaking off the road to the left, the mediums straddling the road and the lights going on the right. The light tanks were to work over the woods with their machine guns as they progressed and the TD's to fire on a suspected strongpoint to the left of Vetweiss.

For the first few hundred yards, the company would be protected from enemy observation by the woods which lay between Soller and Vetweiss. As they passed the edge of these woods, the attacking force would have to swing to the right. As they rounded this corner, all armor was to open fire on the part of town which the company was to take.

Although very little smoke was available from mortars and artillery, if the attackers received anti-tank fire, that smoke was to be laid down in front of the column. A 10 minute artillery barrage was to precede the attack.

Because of the open ground, the company commander asked that the planned 10 minute artillery barrage be increased to 20 minutes. Since smoke was not available, Lt. Jackson, "I" Company, executive officer, took a jeep with a 50 calibre machine gun mounted on it and fired tracers into three haystacks outside of Vetweiss. This set them on fire and the resulting smoke partially obscured the attacking force.

A last minute addition to the plans called for the Second Battalion to deliver overhead machine gun fire for 20 minutes preceding the assault.

At 1200 hours, after checking and opening all radios, the company moved out on its armor. The vehicles deployed, as planned, but before they had gone very far it was apparent that sooner or later some of them were going to bog down.

Out about 300 yards, the TD's started to bog down. They were ordered back to the road but it was too late and every one of them stuck fast in the mud. The medium and light tanks continued to the turn at the corner of the woods. At this point, one of the mired TD's was hit and destroyed by anti-tank fire.

With all guns blazing, the fleet of tanks moved towards Vetweiss. The light tanks began to bog down. The platoon leader's tank in the medium platoon, was hit and destroyed. A light tank was hit and disabled. Captain Wolf, riding the medium tank which had been hit, was stunned by the impact and cut about the face as well as burned about the face and hands. He continued with the company. Tankers remained in their tanks, continuing to fire in support of the troops almost all of which were now on foot. Only two medium tanks of all the 14 armored vehicles which had left Soller reached Vettweiss. One of these had backed into the town when one maneuver had forced him to back around an obstacle. To have turned around would have been to risk the near-certainty of miring the tank.

The first infantrymen to reach the town were the light machine gun squad of the Second Platoon, the platoon Leader, Lt. Leeward Stockwell, Captain Wolf and the executive officer, Lt. William Jackson. At the edge of town they were almost cut down by machine gun fire from their own tanks. This fire was lifted and more men began reaching this point.

Lt. Stockwell with a mixed group, about two squads in strength, moved off with the two tanks to clear his platoon's objective.

More men continued to come in in small groups. Capt. Wolf held them until another group the size of the first was assembled and under Lt. Rudd, Third Platoon Leader, they headed for the church, near the central part of town with orders not to proceed any farther north after cutting the road and securing the position. Since the company had suffered some casualties coming into the town it seemed well at that time not to spread the available force too much.

First Platoon leader, Lt. Thurman Farlow arrived at this point with his entire platoon and, taking a tank from the Second Platoon, his men proceeded to clear the southern part of town.

Up to this time, it had been only about an hour and 45 minutes from the time the company had left Soller.

"K" Company then came into town, following the same route taken by "I". As they came in, artillery dropped to their left. It moved farther right as they came across the open, but as it came down farther and farther to the right, the company continued to move even more in that direction with the result that not a man was injured.

"L" Company came in about 1500 hours. "I" Company was relieved and the other companies went to work clearing the remainder of town. However, it was not until morning that the clearing was completed. "K"

Company had trouble throughout the night with a couple of Mark VI tanks which hung around a factory in the north end of town, preventing clearing in their area.

Although so many tanks had bogged down, the only complete losses of armor were one TD, one medium and one light tank knocked out. "I" Company had lost 15 men, mostly through burns from the flaming tanks.

The attack continued to the north the next day. A patrol reached the outskirts of Gladbach where it became engaged in a firefight and withdrew. The Third Battalion then advanced on the town, with "L" Company leading. The town was taken by noon and then the enemy made life miserable and hazardous with direct artillery fire on the town and on the road leading up from Vettweiss to Gladbach during the remaining daylight hours.

The Second Battalion had been scheduled to move through the Third Battalion in Gladbach, establish a bridgehead across the stream beyond Gladbach and hold while the engineers put in a bridge. After that, the 26th Infantry was to push through, using the bridge for its vehicles. However, the fire on the road was so intense and the country between Vettweiss and Gladbach so flat that it would have been fatal to move the battalion up before dark.

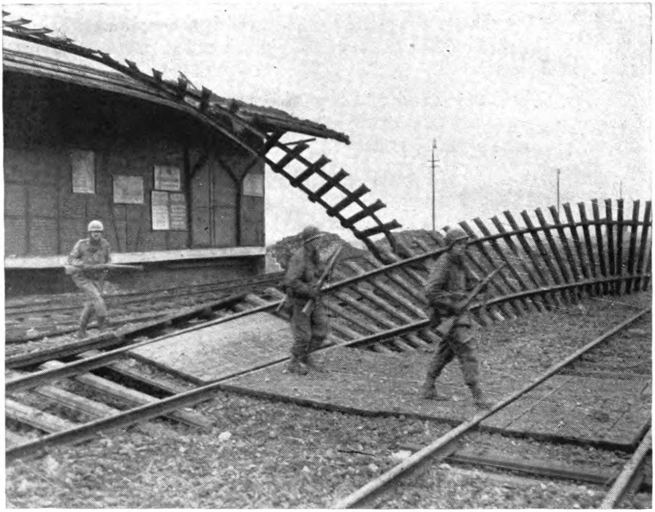
The town itself was full of mines and a couple of roadblocks. These had to be cleared before anyone could get through in force. Plans were amended during the evening to send the 26th east through town, while the Third Battalion of the 16th continued north through Luxheim to Eggersheim.

So heavy was the enemy fire that between noon and 1900, between 1500 and 2000 rounds of artillery had hit Gladbach. Work of clearing the town had to be postponed all afternoon.

While the enemy appeared to be determined to hold the streamline east of Gladbach, resistance to the north was very slight. "L" Company pushed out for Luxheim early in the evening and had reached there by 2030. "K" Company then moved through "L" to Eggersheim which was taken without resistance.

It was not a comfortable night for the 16th. The Second Battalion was trying to establish a bridgehead across the little Neffel River. "G" Company got across and in position, but "E" Company had difficulty most of the night. Engineers who were to bridge the stream were hampered by heavy artillery fire and the bridge which was to be used by the 26th Infantry, as soon as it was finished, was not ready until nearly noon on March 1st.

A counterattack by a force of about forty was driven off during the night by the Second Battalion. Their casualties for the night were about 12 wounded and three killed. Down farther south, in the vicinity of



Infantrymen from Company "I" cross the wrecked railroad tracks in Vettweiss, an attack which the company considers its most successful of the war. February 28, 1945.

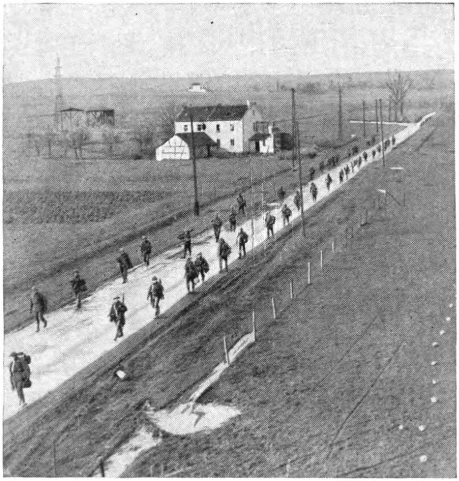
Vettweiss, a "C" Company outpost was attacked from the rear by a German patrol which had worked in behind the position. The attack was repulsed but one man was missing afterwards.

During March 2nd, the 16th remained in position while the 18th and 26th Infantry pushed out to the east in conjunction with the eastward attack of the Ninth Armored Division. These units were making good progress and continued to do so thru March 3rd. Late on that day, the 16th was notified that it would move up to the town of Weilerswist from which it would work on to the east.

Weilerswist had road blocks in it and roads leading into the town were alive with mines, as was the town itself. In addition, the outfit that had taken the town had not completely cleared it.

The move into Weilerswist by the First Battalion was made the night of the 3rd and 4th. The work of demining was expected to take the engineers the better part of the day. A bridge had to be built east of the town. This was held up by a fairly heavy and continuous concentration of heavy mortar and artillery fire into the town from the front, right and left.

During the 4th, the First Battalion pushed out to the high ground about 1000 yards east of Weilerswist. The regiment was making extensive plans for a sustained push eastward until they had seized the ridge overlooking the Rhine, and a few thousand yards back from the river.



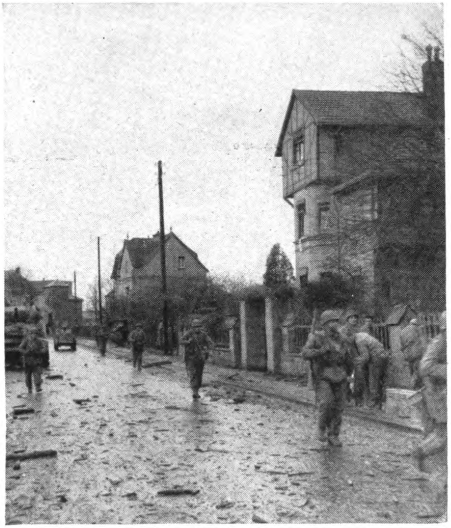
Company "K" platoon moves down highway to enter Lendersdorf, Germany, shortly after crossing Roer River. February 25, 1945.

The regiment was ready to attack at 0400 on the morning of the 5th. The First Battalion moved forward rapidly, engaging in several sharp exchanges but continuing to advance. "K" and "L" Companies went ahead steadily for the Third Battalion, but "I" Company ran into strong resistance that held it up for two or three hours. At 0930, initial objectives had been taken by both battalions, although "I" Company continued to be stood off by the enemy who were being fired on by artillery. This point, only 200 yards northeast of Weilerswist was finally reduced and all companies were in position ready to resume the attack.

At 1200, the Second Battalion pushed through, on its way to Metternich. The Third continued its attack eastward towards Merten.

The 16th was now in the midst of a non-stop marathon that was not to end until the Rhine had been reached. Men were driven unceasingly. Over a period of four or five days, rest was snatched in periods of minutes, not hours. Fighting, driving a retreating enemy never giving him a chance to get set, pushing him relentlessly back toward the Rhine, the regiment fought without rest until this prime objective, symbol of German resistance had been reached.

"F" Company moves down street of Weilerswist to take position at jump-off point for attack on Metternich. March 5, 1945.



From Mertenheid the Third Battalion pushed on to Rosberg, Merten and the southern half of Trippelsdorf; the Second took the wooded high ground 2000 yards northeast of Metternich and patrolled 2000 yards farther; the First took Hemmerich, Kardorf and Waldorf. All this was accomplished in the early morning hours of March 6th.

The infantry were not the only troops who were dead tired. A constant succession of road blocks and mines had kept the engineers so constantly on the job that they were barely able to drag one foot after the other.

Members of "G" Company's weapons platoon move out to support first elements of the Second Battalion in their attack on Metternich. March 5, 1945.

It was during the afternoon of the 6th that the regiment received the first intimation that Bonn would be included in the First Division area. Lt. Lynch, Liaison Officer with division called back the information, saying that corps was considering switching the Bonn area over into First Division territory.

However, nothing definite came down on this change in boundaries and the 16th continued to make plans to drive straight east to the Rhine. Late in the afternoon of the 6th, the Second Battalion pushed to the east and before morning of the 7th had taken Ullekoven, Dersdorf, Bernig and Bornheim. They had captured or destroyed 21 anti-aircraft guns and 16 vehicles, and captured 150 prisoners.

"H" Company men file past as mortarmen from the attached Chemical Mortar platoon set up their heavy 4.2 inch mortars in the outskirts of Weilerswist to support the attack on Metternich. March 5, 1945.

At 1030 on the 7th, the Third Battalion attacked southeast from Bornheim, took Roisdorf and continued on to Alfter. This was an objective which only a few hours before had been assigned to the 47th Infantry.

It was at 0200 on the morning of March 7th that verification of the Bonn rumor came in. At that time, Col. Gibb called his battalion commanders to tell them of the change of plans.
Chapter

Radiomen with "walkie-talkies" follow infantry across open stretch leading to Metternich.

Second wave of Second Battalion troops pressing attack toward Metternich through a blasted churchyard.

Progress of the attack on Metternich is watched from an observation post in a shattered factory building in Weilerswist. Front to rear: Sgt. Robert W. Leiter, Signal Corps motion picture cameraman; Maj. Allen T. Smith, Second Battalion Executive Officer; Lt. Col. Walter H. Grant, CO, Second Battalion; and Lt. Joseph F. MacManus, 7th Field Artillery observer.

BONN

The fall of the Rhineland city of Bonn could have been a bloody, long-drawn out affair. The enemy had laid plans for its defense while the Roer River was still a defensive barrier. Every approach was calculatingly covered by automatic weapons, by clip-fed 20 mm guns and by 75's and dreaded 88's. Scores of anti-aircraft guns that had made Bonn a costly target for our bombers had been dug-in and trained down all roads. Their deadly effect against aircraft was translated into an effect even more deadly against attacking ground forces.

Furthermore, the enemy knew we were coming. What he didn't know was how we were coming, where we were coming, and how fast we were coming. Only the First Division could tell him, and the price of learning was the fall of the city.

The major portion of the attack on Bonn was the work of the 16th Infantry. So skilfully, so swiftly, so neatly was this attack made that its very lack of the sound and fury that characterizes most famous battles made this one spectacular. Not that there wasn't vicious fighting — there was. Not that there weren't casualties — there were. But daring, skill, and speed were so perfectly blended in the attack that the enemy was able to take only an infinitesimal percentage of the toll that might have been expected.

So low were the casualties, so swift the capture of this ancient university city on the banks of the Rhine, that it ranks as the most successful action of the 16th since D-Day.

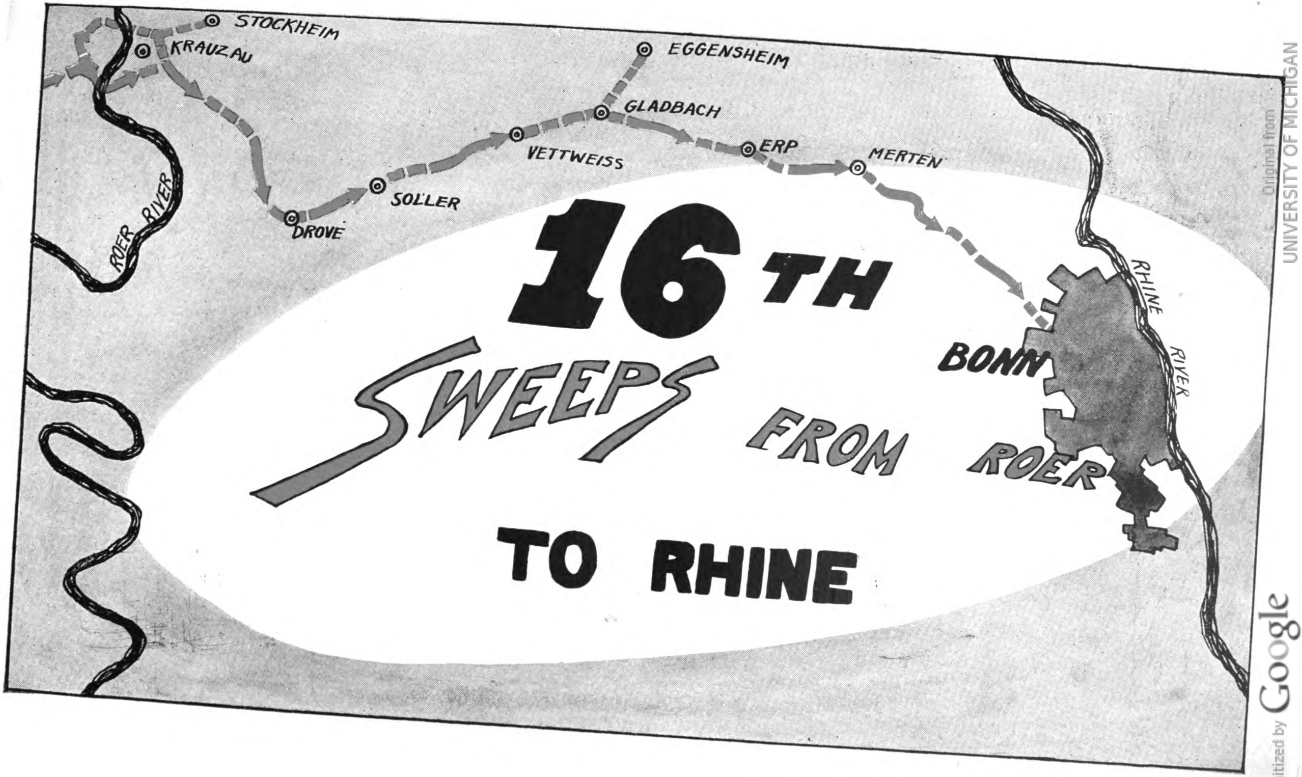
The 16th Infantry, leading the First Division, had swept eastward from the Roer River in the First Army's drive to reach the Rhine. The fall of Cologne had offered the First Army an opportunity to take more ground and to wipe out a greater force of the enemy. The First Division, originally scheduled to attack through a series of dreary little towns on the Cologne Plain, and close up to the Rhine, found itself wheeling to the south and east. In its new path lay Bonn.

Southward into that city, thousands of Germans had been pouring through the narrow corridor between the advancing Americans and the Rhine. Many of them crossed the bridge at Bonn — many more were left on the west side of the river to man the carefully planned defenses of the city.

With the 26th Infantry on the right and the 18th on the left, the 16th swept through 14 villages and towns among the low hills guarding Bonn to the west. In two days' time the Regiment had cleared out these towns, and by evening of March 7 had established a line running from Alfter, 4000 yards west of Bonn to Roisdorf which was a little farther from the city, to the northwest. This line was held by the Third Battalion. To the left rear of this Battalion and facing in a northerly direction was the Second Battalion, located in the vicinity of Bornheim. Continuing the line to the west and also facing north was the First Battalion, holding the towns of Kardorf and Waldorf.

At 0220 on March 7th, Colonel Frederick W. Gibb, Commanding Officer of the 16th Infantry, had told the Regiment that Bonn was its big objective. Speaking to the Second and Third Battalions, he had said, "Our new mission is Roisdorf, Alfter, and straight to Bonn, taking the northern part. I want you to keep going tonight, and the Third Battalion will pass through the Second. The boundary will be the main east-west road out of Bonn. The 18th will be south of us. When the Second gets to the town of Bornheim, I will pass the Third Battalion through to go after Roisdorf and Alfter. Third Battalion will be on a one hour alert. First and Second Battalions will then move through you and go for Bonn."

The enemy could guess that an attack would come toward the city, but an objective of that size could expect to take a terrific pounding from artillery and perhaps bombers before an assault would be made. If that was the enemy's guess, and it was perfectly logical that it should be, he was completely mistaken. He was fooled, and his miscalculation cost him the city in a few hours' time.


16TH
SWEEPS FROM ROER
TO RHINE
STOCKHEIM
KRAUZAU
EGGENSHEIM
GLADBACH
VETTWEISS
ERP
MERTEN
SOLLER
DROVE
ROER RIVER
BONN
RHINE RIVER

The plan of attack that eventually was used called for no artillery preparation, no bombing. It depended for its success on a completely audacious, one might say impudent, dash into the city by an infantry column. Never before in this war had a city of such size and with its defenses been considered legitimate prey for a practically unassisted infantry seizure.

Even considering the Intelligence report on the city to be accurate, it should have been a tough nut to crack for a combination of armor, artillery, and foot troops. (This intelligence report, incidentally, with characteristic optimism, estimated the city's population at 20,000 civilians and its defenders at 600 soldiers, mostly anti-aircraft personnel.)

It was known that there was considerable disorganization among the enemy, that the roads around the city were full of vehicles which were out of gas, but it was also known that there were elements of the First SS Division (Lah) and that there were enemy tanks in the city. Anything but a promising outlook for an infantry attack.

Nevertheless, late on the night of March 7th, an attack order was issued to battalion commanders. The order was fragmentary and verbal. In essence, it was as follows:

1. The enemy situation is as explained above.
2. The 18th Infantry is on the right, the 26th on the left. The latter, together with Task Force Davison (attached to the 16th as of 1400) protects the left flank.
3. The 16th Infantry will attack Bonn, and take the northern part of the city all the way to the Rhine River. First Battalion will be on the right, Third on the left, Second in reserve. Time of attack 0400; LD — present positions; boundaries between battalions — overlay.
4. The First Battalion will attack down the main road from Roisdorf, seize and secure Dransdorf, and go into Bonn. The Second Battalion will initially protect the regimental left flank in the vicinity of Roisdorf, and after Dransdorf is cleared, will be prepared to move. It will also protect the rear of the First Battalion.

   The Third Battalion will attack down the main road from Roisdorf, and go into Bonn, blocking all enemy traffic coming in from the north.

   (In the previous day's order the Second Battalion had been told it would pass through the Third in the attack. The final order was a change from the original plan.)

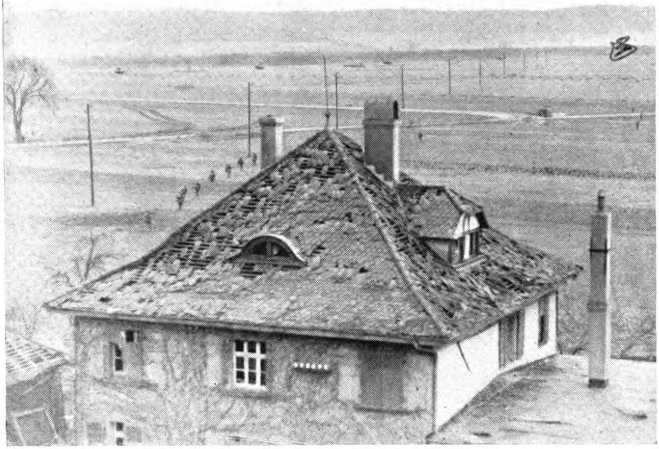
These were the essential elements of the order given verbally and mainly over the phone. Current SOP's took care of the remainder.

An elaboration of these orders resulted in the plan of attack that eventually was used. That plan was to take a column of men and vehicles and move straight down the designated highways into the city.

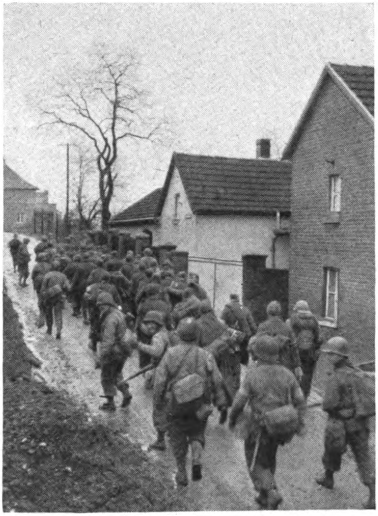
Since there would be no preliminary artillery barrage, it was expected that the enemy would be taken by surprise. To keep that surprise as complete as possible, no fire fights would be engaged in enroute unless absolutely necessary. If the plan worked, the 16th would be in the city before the enemy could realize just what was happening.

To augment the striking power of the attacking battalions numerous attachments were made. The Third Battalion had attached to it one platoon of medium tank, one platoon of M-10 TD's, one platoon of light

Statue of Germany's great composer, Ludwig van Beethoven, with battered cathedral in background in city of Bonn, the capture of which city was the 16th's most successful attack during the European campaigns.



Members of "G" Company's weapons platoon move out to support first elements of the Second Battalion in their attack on Metternich. March 5, 1945.



Group of 75 German prisoners are marched through streets on outskirts of Bonn by "C" Company men. March 8, 1945.

tanks, one platoon of regimental 57 mm AT Guns, 7th Field Artillery Forward Observer, and a Cannon Companay Forward Observer. Also, three 105 mm assault guns were attached. These later proved most effective in the heart of the city. The First Battalion was strengthened similarly.

As soon as orders were received from regiment, battalion commanders got busy on their plans and orders. Typical is the work of the Third Battalion, which considers Bonn the most successful of all attacks made by that organization, in Europe.

After detailing the enemy and friendly situations, giving the regimental plan and time of attack, companies were given the following information by Battalion Commander, Major Edward F. Wozenski:

> This Battalion, with attachments, will attack the city of Bonn with the mission of taking the northern part of the city and blocking all enemy traffic from the north. Attachments will be made as follows:
>
> 1. Company "K" — one platoon medium tanks, one platoon regimental AT guns, one assault gun, an 81 mm mortar FO, 7th Field Artillery FO, and two mine sweeping teams.
> 2. Company "I" — one platoon M-10 TD's, on platoon battalion AT guns, one assault gun, Cannon Company FO, 81 mm mortar observer, one platoon "M" Company heavy MG's.
> 3. Company "L" — one platoon light tanks, one platoon "M" Company heavy machine guns and one assault gun.
> 4. Formation: Column of companies.
> 5. Order of March: "K", "I", "L", and 81 mm mortars.
> 6. Route: as shown on overlay.
> 7. Proceed as far as possible without firing. Work through to company sectors and set up perimeter defense, main strength facing to the north. Clear to the north upon battalion order.
> 8. If held up by a fire fight, Company "K" will take the left side of the road and Company "I" will deploy to the right of road and continue the advance.
> 9. There will be no preparatory artillery barrage for fear of alerting the enemy. Interdictory fire will be constantly fired on the far end of the bridge. (This was the bridge across the Rhine, in Bonn.) Such fire would tend to prevent reinforcements being rushed back across the river to break up the attack.
> 10. Existing SOP will be used.
> 11. PW's will be held in company groups and location reported.
> 12. Vehicles are released to companies. Ammunition dump at present CP.
> 13. One meal, C ration, will be issued at breakfast.

Dortmunder Actien
mpf und Sieg-trotz Terror!

The people of Bonn emerge from their basements and air-raid shelters after the 16th had taken the town.

14. Main supply route will be the route of march. Wire to be laid along MSR as soon as possible. Rear CP present location. Forward CP to be set up in vicinity of points 11 or 12 as soon as practical.

Due to long and continual combat experience, SOP had been set up which did not necessitate the giving of small routine parts of the order.

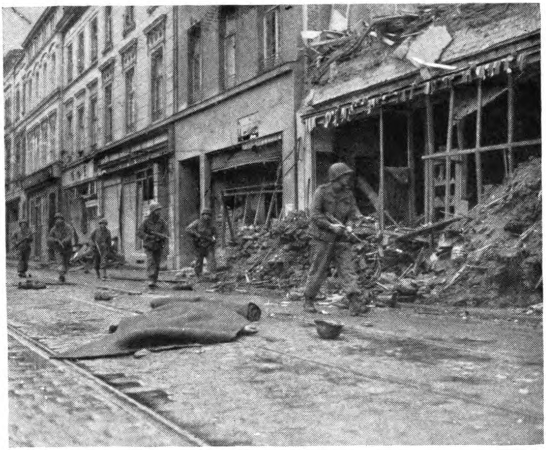
Getting down to the company level, we have the report of "K" Company, which spearheaded the battalion effort. Since this company reached its objective first, it may be said to have spearheaded the regiment itself.

In its preparations, according to an account prepared by the company after action, "K" had received orders for the attack by 2400 on the night of March 7th. All officers and men were briefed immediately.

At 0330 hours, 8 March 1945, sandwiches and coffee were served the company.

With attached units, the company crossed the LD at 0400.

The company marched boldly down the road in a column of two's. The first platoon led the column, under Lt. Raymond H. Smith, followed by the Third platoon, under Lt. Thomas, Second Platoon under Lt. Brauer, a platoon of 4 medium tanks and one assault gun under Lt. Spencer, and Weapons Platoon and Company Headquarters group under Lt. F. H. Smith and Lt. Shaw. Following these elements was a platoon of regimental 57 mm anti-tank guns under Lt. Schultz. The light machine gun section was attached to the First Platoon, and an engineer team with mine sweeping equipment rode the lead tank. The 7th Field Artillery observer and the "M" Company mortar observer travelled with Company Headquarters.



Infantrymen of "C" Company move through the streets of Bonn past the body of a dead German killed in the night fighting for the city. March 8, 1945.

As nearly as a plan of battle can, this one worked without a hitch. Modifications of the original plan were slight. Difficulties encountered were handled with neatness and dispatch.

Swift action, coolness, and daring extended from the top right down to the riflemen in the attacking platoons. This was remarkable because by all standards, the morale of the troops should have been low. They had been attacking steadily day and night for four days. Three of those days had been rainy. There had been almost no sleep. Men were haggard and unshaven. Weary eyes were sunk deep in faces that were masks of fatigue and strain. One platoon leader, who joined the Third Battalion at midnight before the attack, fresh from a "Repple Depple", said his first impression was that he had joined a company of walking dead men. But despite fatigue and the harrowing prospects that confronted them, such was the esprit-de-corps of this famous regiment that all resistance was taken in stride. There was a plan to follow, a daring piece of work to be done, and it was done with all the elan of a rested, fresh, veteran unit.

The early part of the Third Battalion's attack was "K" Company's attack. That company led, hence, it logically should have borne the brunt of any resistance. That was not the case, however. Evidently the enemy was so taken by surprise that "K" walked on past many positions before any show of force could be made.

The company account reports: "The company had passed point 77, machine gun fire came up from Point 94, and flares came up continually from Point 78. The machine gun fire was too high and passed over the company which maintained its march formation even though flares were directly overhead. The company crossed the railroad between Points 78 and 79 and arrived at the traffic circle (a prominent reference point) at 0500.

Sentries along the route — at intersections and billets, principally — were disarmed, usually without resistance, and marched right along in column.

At 545386, two groups of German soldiers were encountered. There were six in each group. One group stood at "trail arms", mouths agape when it dawned upon them that the Americans were in their midst, unheralded by any fire fight. This group gave up immediately. The other failed to halt when challenged. Then occurred one of the strangest incidents in military annals. It was typical of this audacious attack. Possibly it was stupidity, but more probably it was refusal to accept the stupefying fact that the enemy was inside their city. At any rate, the Germans continued on their way. Lt. R. H. Smith, platoon leader of the First Platoon in column, quickly decided against a fire fight lest more enemy be aroused, so the German squad and the American flying column marched side by side down the streets of Bonn.

It seems impossible that after a few yards they should not have realized they were marching with Americans. However, after a block or two, one of the Germans asked: "What Panzer Division is this?"

Lt. Allen G. Spencer, Company "A", 745th Tank Battalion, who was platoon leader of the medium tanks attached to "K" company believes that the Germans may have mistaken his lead tank for a German vehicle. He was at the head of the column in a new tank equipped with a 76 mm gun which had a muzzle brake. This gave it the appearance of the high velocity weapons used on all German tanks. Spencer maintains that this one tank got the whole column past several groups of defenders who might have delayed the battalion for hours in addition to inflicting severe casualties.

At any rate, the two opposing forces marched side by side down Koln Strasse. At Rosental Strasse, the Americans turned left and the Germans continued down Koln Strasse.

By this time it was beginning to grow a little light A few people began to appear on the streets to go about their day's business. Those who discovered the identity of the marching troops, became confused, but many others went on about their work unaware that it was not a friendly column working its way to safety across the Rhine.

This situation continued into the heart of the city. Things were very quiet — almost too quiet, it seemed. However, a change was about to take place.

Just as the Company reached its assigned sector, a short distance north of the bridge, Lt. R. H. Smith and Sgt. Jacks went down to the river's edge. Here they could see that the bridge was still intact. This was at 0530. Shortly after that the calm was broken by some fast and furious fighting.

Traffic began pouring in from the north — German personnel making its way to the bridge. At the same time, "K" Company discovered that there was a ring of SP guns and tanks protecting the approaches to the bridge. They recognized the fact that the Americans were upon them at the same time our infantry discovered them.

The infantry crowded into doorways, windows, alleys, and any other available place that offered some protection while affording a field of fire down the streets. Our tanks moved to the intersection of Rosental and Romer where one tank faced each street, covering the approach of the enemy from all four directions. The assault gun was placed at the intersection of Rosental Strasse and Wachsbleicher.

Within an hour's time, one Mark VI tank, one 88 mm SP gun, two weasels, two trucks, three cars, and one ambulance carrying food and ammunition were destroyed. The assault gun proved its worth by knocking out the Mark VI tank, and a medium tank took care of the SP. The cars and weasels were full of soldiers who fired from the vehicles as they tried to race through the streets covered by the company. The traffic which had started coming from the north stopped when the Germans learned the Americans were in town.

During the first lull in the street fighting, the tank positions were moved a little and the anti-tank platoon went into position. A German tank moved on to the river end of Rosental Strasse but could do no harm with its own guns without coming into full view of ours. It remained there a short time and then withdrew.

Lt. R. H. Smith led a group of five volunteers to clean out the buildings on Rosental Strasse all the way to the river. During this action, Sgt. Jacks was killed by machine gun fire, the only casualty suffered by "K" Company in the attack.

Other companies of the battalion had more difficulty moving into the city. Some of the machine gun fire that had passed over "K" Company had been depressed to the extent where casualties could have been suffered in "I" Company. Some extra bit of good fortune permitted the organization to come through unscathed by this fire.

However, at a crossroads cemetery, about a mile out of the city machine guns emplaced among the gravestones, about 75 yards off the road, cut the column. The three rifle platoons of "I" Company were past the point at the time the Germans opened fire. It was impossible to move the remainder of the company, which consisted of the mortar section of the weapons platoon, company headquarters, and the attached machine gun platoon from "M" Company. A general fire fight was not desirable, but at the same time further progress could not be made unless the enemy strong point were eliminated. A machine-gunner from the attached machine gun platoon solved the problem. The gunner, Private W. H. Paajanen, ordered the driver of this machine gun jeep to whip the vehicle into a side road which paralleled the cemetery. The driver acted as directed, slammed on the brakes, and dove for the ditch. The German weapons which had been firing on the main road, switched their fire to Paajanen, who had opened fire on them. Paajanen, firing what he called a "burst of boxes" continued the fire until his machine gun beltful of ammunition was exhausted. When he ceased firing, German fire had also ceased. When the company came out of the city two days later, six German bodies were found in the cemetery. Paajanen's jeep was riddled with bullet holes, and two tires were flat, but he, himself, was uninjured. He calmly repaired the tires, and the jeep caught up with this portion of the company which moved on immediately.

Since the rifle platoons, TD's and anti-tank guns had continued their march uninterrupted, the portion that had been delayed went into the city with "L" Company.

The lead portion of "I" Company made its way into the city, unaware for a long time that the remainder of the column was not following. It was very dark, and except for the too frequent flares, it was difficult following the road. Several times the only way of following the "K" Company route was by feeling for tank tracks on the dirt road.

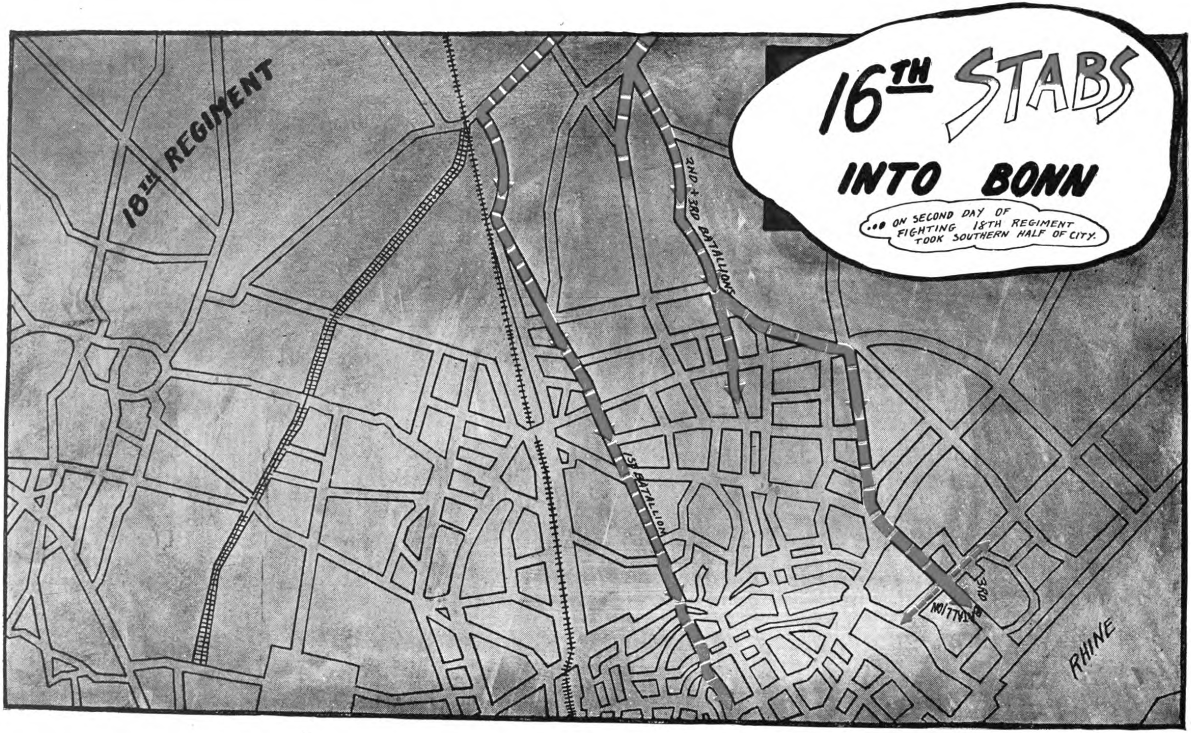
About 600 yards after crossing the railroad tracks, the lead platoon picked up a German sentry at a gate to a camp. Later, it was learned that "K" Company had picked up a German in exactly the same position, a few minutes earlier. This one probably was the relief for the one first captured. Continuing on its way, "I" Company entered the autobahn traffic circle, and headed for the barracks just east of there. There Lt. Stockwell fired on a sedan, knocking it out, and killing its occupants. The men started to police prisoners out of the barracks. After collecting 75 PW's, Captain Karl Wolf, company commander, ordered one of the rear platoons to leave a squad of men to guard the prisoners, and collect any more who might straggle by. When the squad rejoined the company at 1500 hours that afternoon, they had turned 150 prisoners over to battalion.

Continuing on its planned route, "I" Company had its first and only casualty of the day. A soldier stepped on a mine and was killed instantly. Incidentally, this was the only mine discovered along the entire route.

Since it was too dark to read a map, the route was followed entirely from memory. At one point, Captain Wolf went straight instead of following a curve, and came upon a set of trolley tracks which he had expected to find. However, they were the wrong tracks, a fact which was not discovered until another turn to the right had been made and the company started down the main road. When the company reached an overpass over the railway tracks, Captain Wolf halted the company. By that time it was sufficiently light to read the map. Studying the town plan map and aerial photos, they discovered they were in the area assigned to the First Battalion, which had not yet come into town. The company wasted little time in getting out. In order to avoid turning the column around, an about face was ordered, and the rear platoon became the lead. More and more Germans were picked up enroute, but rather than get into a street fight, delaying progress, riflemen fired only on those Germans who first opened fire on them.

On reaching point 12, the company hurriedly went into position with the Second and Third Platoons on line, and the First facing to the rear to protect from that direction. Two TD's were stationed with the Second Platoon, blocking the road leading down to point 14, which was the intersection of Augustus Ring and Romer Strasse. One TD went with the Third Platoon, and the other TD, and the assault gun went into position in the corner of the block at Point 12, defending the rear. As the TD's went into position with the Second Platoon, both were fired at by a tank — the same one which later was knocked out by "K" Company.

With machine guns and BAR's trained down all streets, the company began to exact a toll in casualties from the enemy. By midafternoon, one half track, one ambulance and two sedans were knocked out by the Second Platoon, and the company as a whole had killed thirty Germans.


16TH STABS INTO BONN
... ON SECOND DAY OF FIGHTING 18TH REGIMENT TOOK SOUTHERN HALF OF CITY.
18TH REGIMENT
2ND + 3RD BATALLIONS
1ST BATALLION
3RD BATALLION
RHINE

The First Platoon knocked out a German "volkswagon" with two German officers at point 12. Both officers were killed by BAR fire. A half hour later, a German tank pulled into Koln Strasse, and apparently thinking it an American vehicle, hurriedly got off two rounds from its 88, decapitating the two bodies. Germans lost their heads both literally and figuratively all that day.

An interesting example of the way messages can become confused occurred later in the morning. An "I" Company platoon leader lost a map of the town marked with reference points which are referred to as "measles". Lt. William Jackson, Company Executive Officer, using his "300" radio, called the relay station saying, "A map with measles has been lost. Do something about it". The relay station operator delivered the following message to battalion, "A man has the measles. What are you going to do about it?"

Company "L", the last company in column, had been held up when "I" Company was cut in two by the machine guns at the cemetery. From there it proceeded into the city to Point 11 where a gas station and large building sheltered German snipers. A light tank was called up. After a few rounds of 37 mm shells, the company moved in and took 29 PW's.

The company then received word that Companies "I" and "K" were already in position. "L" proceeded to point 12. From there, two platoons went into position facing north, and the third remained on Koln Strasse, protecting to the rear.

Thus, by 0900 hours, the Third Battalion had reached its objective on the banks of the Rhine, and had set up defensive positions, occupying an area of a few square blocks in the very heart of the city.

The First Battalion had a little more difficulty in its advance. To begin with, the town of Dransdorf had to be taken enroute to the city. "C" and "A" Companies led the attack, advancing along the main road into Bonn. Approximately 300 yards outside Dransdorf, the lead platoon of "C" Company ran into small arms and machine gun fire. This was quickly overcome, and 73 prisoners were taken. From there on all the way into the city, a constant stream of prisoners pushed to the rear. Comparatively little artillery or mortars were used by the enemy, although some fire from self-propelled weapons hit the advancing troops. House to house fighting was necessary to clear this small town. Moving on to Bonn, the battalion entered a factory area southwest of the railroad tracks. Here, more machine gun and rifle fire held up the attack. The enemy, located in bunkers, were hard to dislodge. The Second Platoon of "C" Company eventually outflanked the positions, and 16 more Germans were captured. From there, the outer edge of Bonn was entered, with the First Platoon of "C" Company leading.

Travelling fast, the First Platoon of this company almost reached the center of town before it was again stopped by machine gun and 20 mm fire. Meanwhile, the Second and Third Platoons were being delayed further back in the vicinity of the railroad.

About ten o'clock the company was regrouped and began advancing down the streets of Bonn, guiding on Bornheimer Avenue. In the center of town, the enemy resistance stiffened. His defense became so stubborn that "C" Company was halted for nine hours. During this time, however, "A" Company was driving through to the river. By 0830, squads were mopping up the side streets only a couple of blocks from the river.

"C" Company came under heavy German artillery, mortar, and rocket fire from the other side of the river. Several casualties resulted from the barrage. Since the flanks were open, it was suicidal to advance down streets as a steady stream of fire came down intersecting streets. Some progress was made in clearing out buildings in the immediate neighborhood, but it was not until 2300 that night that the company was able to move into its objective.

Opposition to this last advance was not great, and the area was secured in good order. The company CP moved into the house said to be the birthplace of the great composer, Beethoven. The remainder of the night was spent in clearing the buildings in the area.

During the time the First Battalion was held up, the Third Battalion was also under the same intense shelling that caused the casualties in "C" Company. Without regard for the fact that the area was filled with thousands of German civilians, the troops across the river poured unceasing fire into the positions occupied by the fast-moving Americans.

The largest rockets came in all afternoon and evening. Mortars fired continually, and there was considerable artillery, with not a little shelling from direct-fire weapons hitting the area on the river bank.

During this time the Second Battalion had been back in the vicinity of Roisdorf, protecting against any threat to the regiment's left flank. By mid-morning, by-passed German elements south of the highway traversed by the fast-flying 16th, as well as dual purpose batteries to the northeast, across the Bonn—Cologne autobahn, had recovered from their surprise and manned their guns. Any vehicle that showed on the Roisdorf-Bonn road drew everything from small arms and 20 mm fire up to the heaviest automatic artillery fire.

The battalions in the city, literally, were cut off. Then, the Second Battalion was put to work. By mid-afternoon, these hold-out elements were driven from their positions by artillery fire and assault teams. By night, the road into the city was opened, and ammunition and food once again flowed in to the men in the assault companies.

The 18th Infantry, which had been assigned the southern half of the city as its mission had had a great deal more difficulty fighting its way in, and did not arrive till evening. For almost an entire day, two battalions of the 16th had not only penetrated, but held one of Germany's prized cities.

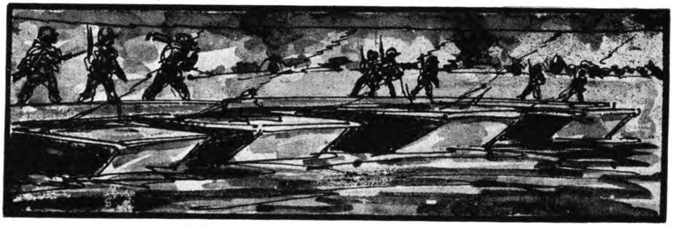
During that night, plans were made to hurry a force across the still intact bridge. Shortly before the push-off, however, the bridge was demolished at 2130 by the Germans, who by this act gave tacit admission that the city was irretrievably lost.

The situation developed swiftly the next morning. The whole plan for the defense of the city had been punctured by the 16th's swift stab through to the Rhine. All that remained to be done was the cleaning out of scattered, last-ditch resistance. 1,700 German soldiers were taken within the city. As many more escaped across the river. (Intelligence, it will be recalled, reported 600 troops defending Bonn.)

By mid-afternoon of March 9th, the city was declared cleared, all organized resistance having ceased. At 1900, the entire division was out of contact with the enemy:

The 16th had lost six men killed, 51 wounded, and 3 missing.

Within 72 hours of the time the division was notified of the assignment to take Bonn, the battle had been planned, fought, and successfully finished. With swift, workmanlike precision, the 16th had dared to ignore formidable defenses, had knifed into the city, and broken the defenders' hearts. It was a job typical of the 16th, executed in perfect fashion — the regiment's most successful attack on the continent.



CHAPTER XVI

On the 10th of March, Bonn securely in American hands, the First and Third Battalions of the 16th were drawn out of the city to rest from their arduous work of the past two weeks, starting with the crossing of the Roer River. The Second Battalion moved to the vicinity of Waldorf where Companies "E" and "F" took over positions of the 32nd Cavalry Squadron, on the river.

The remainder of the regiment went in for the usual rest area occupations — drill, squad problems, baths, and care and cleaning of clothing and equipment.

In the early morning hours of the 13th, "I" and "L" Companies relieved a battalion of the 26th Infantry in the town of Wesseling and its vicinity, north of Bonn and on the banks of the Rhine.

During this period the progress of the divisions at work enlarging the bridgehead at Remagen was of prime interest to every man in the 16th. Everyone knew that sooner or later the First Division would be thrown into the struggle.

On the 14th, the 8th Division began to reconnoiter for quarters and for the relief of areas held by the 16th. Late that afternoon, "L" and "I" Companies came off line. Later in the day, "E" and "F" Companies were relieved. The regiment settled down to a period of tense waiting since by this time it was apparent that it would soon be sent across the Rhine. On the 15th, word came down to the battalions that the move would occur, probably, on the 17th. Weapons were test-fired and preparations in general were made for the crossing.

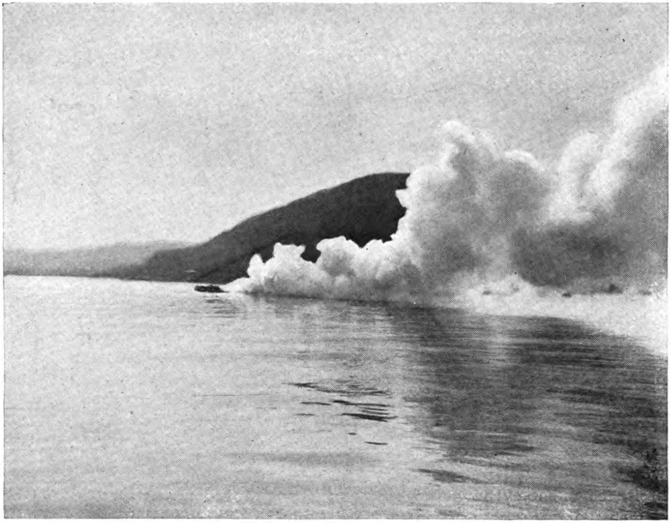
On the 17th, the First Battalion crossed the Rhine moving into a forward assembly area in the vicinity of Honnef. The next day, the remainder of the combat team moved across early in the morning and went into assembly areas in the vicinity of the same town and Rheinbreitbach. That evening, the First and Third moved up on line, relieving elements of the 310th Infantry, 78th Division. The Third Battalion was centered on Ittenbach with an outpost a thousand yards to the north. The First Battalion was east of Ittenbach across the Cologne—Frankfurt Autobahn.

Most of the day was taken up with preparations for a general push to the north the following morning before daylight. Several hundred rounds of artillery came into the two battalion areas during the day.

That evening, the 78th Division on the left continued its advance northward on a front running from the Rhine east to the 16th.

At 0200 hours on March 20th, the advance started. In a little over an hour, "K" Company had cleared through the village of Ruttschied, 2000 yards north of Ittenbach, taking some prisoners, wounding several, and suffering a few casualties herself. Part of the First Battalion moved through this town and worked on to the north. "B" Company rapidly closed in and took Boseroth, another thousand yards to the north, taking more prisoners. "C" Company advancing on their left reached a point a few hundred yards northwest of Boseroth where it met heavy resistance With the assistance of tanks they beat down the defense, taking 60 prisoners and sweeping on through the strongpoint.

Working forward by companies, the Third Battalion pushed ahead to the vicinity of Bellinghausen, then to a village south of the day's objective at Stieldorferhohn before noon. An "I" Company 6-man patrol,



A mechanical smoke generator in a boat on the Rhine River throws up a screen to protect a treadway bridge in the Remagen area. Such generators as these screened the 16th as it crossed the Rhine.

under Sgt. Maurice Bly worked through heavily wooded terrain up a hill to the west of this village, taking its time, parleying with small groups of the enemy, fighting others and eventually taking over 40 without the loss of a single man.

"L" Company on the right had run into a firefight earlier in the morning and had several wounded and two men killed. During the afternoon, "I" Company moved towards Stieldorferhohn. They reached a ridge commanding the town from the south. One platoon started into the town from the west and another was mounted on the five tanks attached to the company for a fast dash over the ridge and into the town. As the tanks came over the crest of the ridgeline, 88's opened fire with HE evidently designed to strip the infantry from the armor. One man was killed and two more wounded by this fire. The platoon leaped from the tanks and hurried at top speed over the open ground, reaching the outskirts of the town ahead of the tanks and over-running defenders who gave up with only a semblance of a fight so swift was the assault. Clearing the town was a matter of only a half hour and "I" Company with one platoon of "L" which had moved in on the right was in position just ahead of a short barrage which hit the town.

On the regimental right, the First Battalion had had trouble most of the day with scattered tanks and SP guns but had continued to move ahead until they were on line with the Third Battalion, taking the town of Oberpleis as their main objective.

That night, a combat command of the Third Armored Division relieved "I" and "L" Companies which moved back to Ittenbach. The Second Battalion moved two companies on line between "K" Company which had remained in position and the First Battalion.

On March 21st, the Second and First Battalions carried the attack forward as the Third, with the exception of "K" Company rested in Ittenbach.

Resistance along the front varied from light to very stubborn with the majority being of the latter variety. The Germans had considerable artillery, tanks and SP guns which made the going difficult even when their infantry was of low calibre. Their foot troops varied from experienced soldiers to newly inducted personnel only three to five days out of the ranks of civilians.

The First Battalion attacked at 0200 in the morning, intending before the day was over to reach the high ground in the vicinity of Westerhausen, some 2500 yards to the northeast of their positions in and near Oberpleis. Five hours later they had cleared Wahlfeld and Pleiserhohn and were prepared to continue when their advance was slowed then halted by heavy armored concentrations along the Westerhausen-Soven Road. Air and artillery support worked over the armor, destroyed some tanks and SP's and the battalion moved forward again at 1630. An hour later the day's objective had been taken and the attacking companies dug in on a line between Westerhausen and Bucholz.

To the west, the Second Battalion had had equally difficult going. Their problems were much the same as the First's. An early advance against moderate resistance bogged down when enemy armor made a dogged stand. The battalion lost its tank platoon leader, killed, and the platoon sergeant, wounded. The platoon came under command of one of the tank-commander sergeants. Three enemy tanks were disposed of by this platoon and others were hit or dispersed by artillery fire. Continuing the attack in the middle of the afternoon, the Second had taken Rott and Soven, which were Northwest of the First Battalion's positions, at about the same time the First reached Westerhausen and Nieder Bucholz.

That night, the Third Battalion of the 18th Infantry, on the 16th's immediate right, was pulled out of line after a couple of strenuous day's action, and "I" and "L" Companies of the 16th went in to relieve them, with "K" in reserve.

The two companies were in Kurschied and a few hundred yards east and west of that village. Kurschied was burning when "I" Company, which occupied the town itself, entered. It continued to burn throughout the night as more enemy artillery and rockets came into it.

In the gap between the First and Second Battalions, a patrol from "A"' Company ran into a group of thirty or more Germans shortly after midnight. Mortars and artillery beat them off. The enemy threw considerable quantities of artillery and mortar fire in on the Third Battalion, with some also falling on the other two battalions during the night hours.

917 prisoners had been taken by the regiment in the first two days of the drive to push out of the bridgehead.

The general direction of the advance had swung around slightly from north to northeast. Now, fronting the regiment, at a distance of one to two thousand yards was a small stream. Neither deep nor wide, it was fordable by infantry but created enough of an obstacle to make a bridge necessary for vehicular crossings.

During the night of the 21st-22nd, patrols went down to this stream, or attempted to reach it. Most of them were fired upon, one from "I" Company, on the regimental right, drawing heavy automatic weapons fire, while another from the same company working towards the stream only three or four hundred yards to the left, reached it and reconnoitered for a crossing.

On the 22nd, the First Battalion which had nearly reached the stream at Lanzenbach, cleared a few remaining buildings and set up a defensive position, without crossing.

The Second Battalion pushed out to the north and cleared the small town of Wippenhohn. The Third Battalion took a pounding from artillery and rocket fire all day long.

That evening, "L" Company attacked towards Kurenblack, while "I" Company attacked down both sides of the road leading through its sector down to the river. Only one platoon of "I" Company reached its objective that night. On the right of the road, the area was so heavily mined that the platoon attacking there was withdrawn. The platoon on the right engaged in a continuing fire-fight through woods that lasted for three hours. Emerging from the woods and attempting to sweep across a couple of hundred yards of open ground into a small group of buildings on the streamline, this platoon was met by heavy small arms fire supplemented by German bazooka fire. Withdrawing into the woods and pounding the enemy with the company's mortars for an hour, the platoon, now reinforced by another of the same strength, pushed on into the buildings which had been evacuated by this time by all but a few of the enemy who put up no more resistance.

"L" Company had similar difficulty, not entering Kurenblack until the following morning. Meanwhile, the force from "I" Company, ordered to send a contact patrol half way to Stocken to meet a similar patrol from "L", set out after having been informed that Stocken was taken and proceeded all the way into Stocken, travelling parallel with and to the rear of what afterwards turned out to be the German defensive line. Expecting to find Americans in Stocken, the patrol, an officer and two men, hastily withdrew when challenged by German soldiers.

There was not a great deal of action on the 23rd. All along the line, the 16th was building up preparatory to crossing the stream and pushing out for the high ground a few thousand yards beyond. The enemy appeared to have similar ideas. A few captured Germans indicated that they had been reconnoitering for a stream crossing of their own which would permit tanks and infantry to attack in force towards the ridge line held by the 16th. It was a question of which force would be ready to strike first. The isolated portion of "I" Company was in radio contact with the balance of the company throughout the day and managed to keep the ridge in front of it plastered with cannon, mortar and artillery fire until dark. Movement was apparent along this ridge at all times and the outpost was subjected to mortar and SP gun fire all day long. Well dug-in, the company suffered only one or two casualties.

Meanwhile, back along the 16th-held ridgeline, the companies in those positions were taking a terrific pounding from a mounting crescendo of rocket and artillery fire. From daylight till 1630, over 4500 hundred rounds fell on the regiment, with two-thirds of these being heavy rockets. Between 1630 and 2030 the tempo increased and as many more rounds fell during that four hour period as had fallen in the entire day.

Shortly after dark, the "I" Company outpost was attacked by a tank and a sizeable force of infantry. The tank crossed the brook and the infantry worked in to within a few yards before heavy mortar and cannon fire finally broke the assault. Fire was called in so close that a large number of mortar rounds fell in on the platoon's own positions. It was more than two hours before the enemy withdrew and during the entire time the group defending this advanced position was under heavy small arms fire to which was added the hazard of friendly mortar and cannon fire when these supporting weapons were called in almost on top of the tenaciously held position.

Towards midnight, the regiment started moving up. The little river was crossed in three places, one for each of the battalions. During the early part of the attack, gains were made consistently. "B" Company ran into a stiff small arms fight near Michelsohn. The company was slowed down for a while then continued to progress. This was about 0300 in the morning. About the same time, the Second Battalion began to run into trouble. They had knocked out one SP gun and at this time "E" company encountered another. Also, the town of Geisbach was held in some strength and "G" Company, while it had entered the outskirts, began to have difficulty.

Some of the German infantry remained on the west side of the stream on ground which the 16th had already by-passed. When one platoon of "H" Company passed through the village of Niederkumpel, a thousand yards back from the river, it was hit by heavy small arms and tank fire.

The fighting was beginning to be some of the heaviest the 16th had had since Hamich. "L" Company crossed a bridge to take the town of Rottgen. "I" Company passed through the town and proceeded along the road to Kunzenhohn and Lichtenberg. 500 yards from the town, the company was met by heavy tank and small arms fire. The fighting for a few minutes was at extremely close range. A platoon leader killed a German, with his Tommy gun, so near him that the dying man fell on top of the lieutenant who was crouched in a ditch.

The company was forced to withdraw a couple of hundred yards where it was pounded by tank and mortar fire for more than two hours before it was reorganized to a point where it could advance again. During this time, many men were wounded by tree-bursts. By the time reorganization was completed, a platoon of medium tanks had joined the company. Daylight had come before the company set out to advance across four hundred yards of open ground. Proceeding on a line with the tanks, the infantry crossed the ground, suffering casualties as the enemy resisted bitterly from woods and a deep gully which paralleled the front.

More than fifty prisoners were taken before "I" Company reached the outskirts of Kunzenhohn which was, itself, strongly held. By this time, the company strength was considerably depleted and ammunition almost exhausted. A further advance could not be made until a re-supply of small arms ammunition could be effected. Before this could be done, "K" and "L" companies had reached the town. "L", taking the tanks with them, pushed on into Lichtenberg in the face of heavy small arms fire. The lead American tank destroyed a German tank at close range, the two armored vehicles fighting it out at a distance of about a hundred yards.

To the north, the First and Second Battalions were having their troubles. A pocket between the First and Third still contained enemy infantry and two or three tanks. It was disconcerting, if not demoralizing, to have fire come in from the rear as well as the front. The right flank company of the First Battalion had to work on this pocket before a further advance could be made. No help could come from the Third since it had more than its hands full with the engagement around Lichtenberg.

In the Second Battalion area, "G" Company was facing more than it could handle. Advancing into the outskirts of a village, it was beaten back by a strong German counterattack. Losses were severe. It was more than two hours before an organization was made and "G" again pushed into the bitterly contested beaten little town.

During the day, while armor and infantry counterattacks were forming, P-47's, working dangerously close to the 16th's front, hit the enemy before they could launch their assaults. The infantry was usually dispersed by these bombings and several tanks were destroyed and others disabled.

Close teamwork between the First and Third Battalions saved the Third from a severe counterattack. "B" Company of the First was in position to see a large group of tanks and troops forming in Lichtenberg preparatory to moving down on Kunzenhohn where "I" and "K" companies were holding. "B" adjusted heavy fire on the enemy, breaking the formations before they could start an attack.

At 0940, "G" Company in Geisbach was getting another heavy counterattack with armor and infantry pouring in a heavy volume of fire as they advanced.The company was calling for medical attention, infantry support and bazookas, grenades and small arms ammunition.

At 1100, 5 tanks came down on "C" company, moving up to within one hundred yards before our artillery beat them off. Lt. Col. Driscoll was dubious about holding them off if they came in again.

At 1130, S-3 was calling for three air missions to hit 10 tanks in one place, 6 in another, and two dozen armored vehicles, mostly tanks, in another.

10 tanks remained in the town of Geisbach, for which "G" Company had been grimly fighting from before daylight until early afternoon. The Field Artillery Observer with the company called artillery fire in on his

Maj. Robert Cullis, present Executive Officer of the Regiment. With the 16th in Africa, Major Cullis was on duty in the States for more than two years before his return to this organization in December, 1945.

own position when the enemy armor was almost on top of the company. The 16th's tanks and TD's were alerted for a probable enemy armored break-through. The artillery fire, however, again staved off the threat.

Most of the companies were on their day's objectives by noon, but their fighting was by no means ended. Even where resistance was lightest and it could hardly be described as light anywhere along the line, the clearing of villages was dangerous costly work. At other points it was a case of digging in as hastily as possible and doggedly throwing back counterattack after counterattack.

Terrible road conditions, particularly in the First and Second Battalion areas hampered ammunition resupply and the evacuation of wounded proceeded far too slowly.

"B" Company, at Buchholz took a terrible pounding from artillery and mortars and enemy infantry started for the town across open fields. Their attempt was suicidal since artillery and mortar observation was excellent and large numbers were killed and wounded.

At 1730, "G" Company was finally able to report Geisbach cleared, although the company was so badly beaten it asked to be relieved for reorganization. Their losses included 4 killed, 12 wounded and 50 missing.

"L" Company was scheduled to try for the town of Bierth, 1500 yards east of Lichtenberg at 2000 hours. However, the attack was delayed. The battalion's tanks had almost exhausted their ammunition and could not move into an attack without a new supply.

It was two and a half hours later before the advance could start. Half way to Bierth, at a road junction, small arms and tank fire temporarily halted the attackers. Clearing the area they moved ahead to within 300 yards of another road junction where their tanks blazed away for several minutes at several machine guns forming a last line of protection around the small town. The tiny village was entered eventually and a defense was begun. Before any degree of organization could be effected, an enemy armored column, apparently believing the place still in their hands, paraded through the town so fast that no fire was brought on it. This force set up on the west side of the village in some woods, where an hour later, as "I" Company came up the road to assist "L" in a further advance on Bierth, the armor surprised them and cut down a considerable number, killing two and wounding a dozen more before the company withdrew to Lichtenberg, near whose outskirts they were when the tank fire, supplemented by machine gun and 20 mm fire from half-tracks hit the Americans.

Some time later, the column, apparently suspecting that it was in American-held territory withdrew through the village where "L" Company and attached tanks and TD's were waiting for it. A short, fierce battle at incredibly close ranges ensued. Lt. Spencer, tank platoon leader, held his fire until the lead tank, a Mark VI was 20 yards away. His first round went through the enemy's turret. At that point, all the other tanks, TD's, anti-tank guns and bazookas in the village opened up on the marauders. Three enemy tanks, an SP and a half-track were destroyed and most of their personnel killed. One of the defenders' TD's was destroyed and the other disabled.

American losses in armor had been heavy during the preceding twenty four hours. The Third Battalion had lost all its TD's and all but two tanks for the heaviest losses. The First and Second Battalions had lost almost as much.

However, there were indications that enemy resistance might be weakening. The 16th now held the dominating terrain features and attack after attack by the Germans was being driven back. Groups of 25 to 100 Germans hit the First Battalion time and again during the night but none of them penetrated the hard-won positions.

The 25th was taken up with more thrusts at the Germans by the First and Third Battalions. The Second was in the process of holding and improving its positions up near the Sieg River until it could be relieved by a battalion of the 78th Division and go into reserve to support a further advance to the northeast by the Third Battalion.

The First Battalion worked up to within a few hundred yards of the Sieg River while late in the afternoon, the Third finally took Bierth against rather light resistance. That night, "I" Company, reinforced with a platoon of light and a platoon of medium tanks moved 2500 yards northeast to Suchterschied which was taken after a short sharp fight with infantry and tanks. One enemy tank, damaged, managed to withdraw from the town but later burned.

The 11th Panzer Division which had been in the area and which had been furnishing much of the armor which had been causing a great deal of the trouble had pulled out in advance of the 16th's attack.

Two days of preparation and two more days of relentless pressure, of advancing in the face of the heaviest resistance and holding against the fiercest counterattacks had finally broken the German hold and driven him north of the Sieg River. It had been a bitter fight. In fact newspapers correspondents reported the 16th as having experienced the heaviest fighting on the Western front during the four or five day period. Almost 2000 prisoners were taken during the same period.

During the same time, the Third Armored Division was hammering its way towards a breakthrough a little farther south. This virtually ended the Battle of the Remagen Bridgehead. What was brewing now was something bigger. It was no longer a struggle for a foothold but an effort for a stranglehold. It was the beginning of the formation of the Ruhr pocket.

CHAPTER XVII

Now there began the process of clearing the flanks of the Third Armored Division as it pressed to the east. Working on the left of the armor, the 16th worked generally north from the path cleared by the Third Armored. This movement would continue for a day or two then the regiment would jump to the east and again clear to the north.

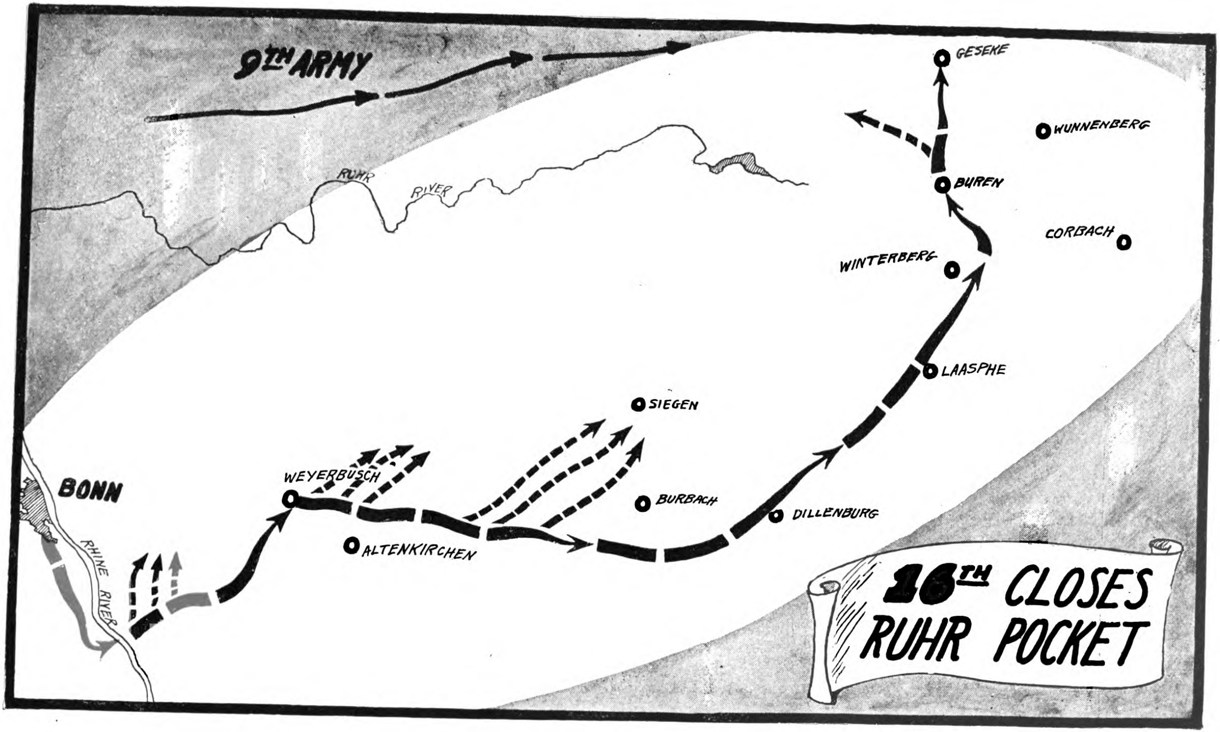
On March 27th, the First and Second Battalions moved ten thousand yards east and pushed farther east and north through the towns of Marenbach, Rimbach, Olsen, Werkhausen, Kuchhausen and several other smaller villages. Resistance was spotty. Sometimes there was none at all. At others there was continuous small arms fire and occasionally mortars would slow the advance.

On the 28th, the Third Battalion carried the ball, allthough the First and Second cleared more ground. The Second ascertained through reconnaissance that nearly all its area was unoccoupied, while the First had to fight for Koppingen.

Late at night, the Third Battalion moved out northeast towards the Sieg river with the town of Hamm as the main objective. Moving in column, the battalion proceeded several thousand yards, picking up a few prisoners enroute and passing through Pracht before being held up at the outskirts of Hamm. Stopped all night long, the battalion did not take Hamm until the next morning when "I" Company went around to the south and east and took it from the right rear, with little resistance.

A powder plant on the outskirts of Hamm contained 70,000 pounds of black powder. Mortar fire, thrown by the "M" Company mortars fell near the plant, but fortunately did not hit it.

Shortly after midnight on the night of March 29—30, "I" Company entered the town of Dillbrecht which was under the fire of artillery from the 104th Division. The company had been in the town more than half an hour before this fire could be called off. Half the town was clear before 20 mm fire from half-tracks which had been reported previously by a PW slowed the work. One man was killed, but tanks were brought up and with the infantry clearing from house to house under cover of machine gun fire, the enemy vehicles were slowly driven out of the town. The rest of the night was a succession of patrols to the next town on the list followed by movement of the company, another patrol and another move until by morning, Steinbach had been added by "K" Company, and Fellerdilln and Offdilln had been taken by "I".


9TH ARMY
RUHR RIVER
GESEKE
WUNNENBERG
BUREN
CORBACH
WINTERBERG
LAASPHE
SIEGEN
BONN
WEYERBUSCH
ALTENKIRCHEN
BURBACH
DILLENBURG
RHINE RIVER
16TH CLOSES RUHR POCKET

In the morning, "I" Company set out for Irmgarteichen and "L" for Hainchem, the day's final objectives. "I" Company took its town early in the afternoon. Situated on high ground, the company's machine guns were able to assist "L" Company's seizure of Hainchem by knocking out the crews on a 20 mm gun and some machine guns to the rear of Hainchem and about 800 yards to the right of "I".

The Second Battalion was also making progress during the night, working north through Wilgersdorf under small arms fire and then proceeding to Rudersdorf where an enemy strongpoint delayed them for several hours before it was reduced and the town taken.

On the 31st, the entire regimental combat team made a long jump of more than 100 miles to Buren where it went into position to seal the Ruhr pocket which had just been formed by a junction of the First and Ninth Armies. The Third Armored had smashed its way through on an extremely narrow front and the 16th was rushed up to Buren near the point of the two armies' meeting to prevent a break-out of enemy troops trapped in the pocket. This was the great trap which early estimates supposed contained 30—50,000 Germans but from which more than 300,000 eventually were taken.

On the 1st of April, the Second Battalion was rushed to Geseke where a breakout threatened.

Patrols were fanned out to all surrounding towns around Buren. A Third Battalion patrol met heavy small arms fire near Hennere. However, in general, the sector was quiet. For two or three days, the regiment pushed into all the small towns around Buren, none of which had been entered previously by American troops. Among the material captured were 40—50 airplanes, an ammunition dump, and several anti-aircraft guns. A vital aircraft repair parts plant was also added to the prize list.

About a week in this vicinity gave the regiment some needed rest and a period of relaxation from daily combat. Meanwhile, the Third Armored Division had been continuing its pile-driving advance to the east and was nearing the Weser River, fifty miles beyond Buren. Bridges across the river had been demolished. Infantry was needed to make an assault crossing and secure a bridgehead for the armor. The First Division drew the job and on April 6, the regiment moved to a forward assembly area in the vicinity of Brakel.

On the 7th, extensive reconnaissance was carried on along the river to locate sites for assault boat crossings.

What could have been a very bloody and difficult crossing turned out to be unexpectedly easy. An easily defended river line, the Weser was covered only by light enemy forces. The First and Second Battalions ran into light opposition consisting of 16—18 year old SS troops and several machine gun strongpoints. All of these were liquidated with only a small number of Americans wounded as the price of the liquidation. The Third Battalion crossed without opposition in its sector.

Two enemy half tracks worked around to the rear of "A" Company in the early hours of darkness but were soon captured intact.

Swiftness of the river's current tore out the footbridge in the Third Battalion area time and again. Although most of the battalion had been intended to cross on the bridge, most of it crossed by boat.

A treadway bridge which was being installed was not ready by next morning, although it had been promised for shortly after midnight. The assault companies were on the far shore without armor all night.

In the morning when the attack was renewed it went ahead still without armor. However, the three battalions advanced with practically no opposition. The Second Battalion ran into numerous road blocks in their area but most of them were completely undefended.

The Third Battalion had only a minor skirmish in getting on its objectives while the First had as easy a time as the other two units.

Late in the afternoon, plans began to emerge for assignment of the Third Battalion to the 4th Cavalry Group for an undisclosed mission to the east.

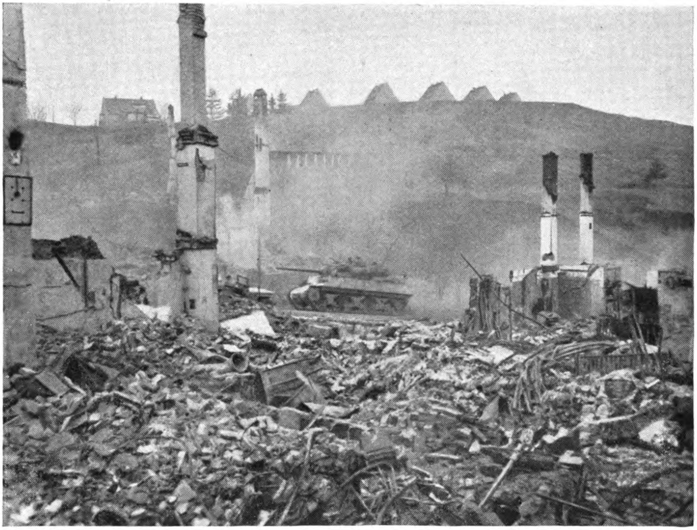
For several days they operated entirely with the 4th Cavalry hence, their story differs during that period from that of the rest of the regiment. Moving swiftly with the cavalry, the Third, with "I" and "L" Companies in the lead, "K" Company in reserve, drove through town after town straight into the foothills of the Harz Mountains many miles east of the Weser River. Resistance was spotty, some road blocks being defended vigorously, while at other times no opposition developed.

A few casualties were incurred, a few men died, but the team drove swiftly ahead, through Einbeck, Ondershausen, Osterode and Sulzhausen. However, the arrangement was never satisfactory, weakening, as it did, the 16th by one-third. The Third Battalion also found it difficult to work with the cavalry group since the cavalry leaders found it difficult to understand the problems and tactics of the infantry.

The other two battalions remained in division reserve until the 13th, following up the First Division advance of the 18th and 26th Infantry. These units were spearheading through enemy territory with flanks more or less open. The result was that the 16th, in division reserve, occasionally found enemy to its rear. However, the casualties during this period were confined to two killed and several injured when a Military Government truck overturned.

On the 12th, the two battalions passed through elements of the 104th Division and continued the attack to the east. This was the first day in the Harz Mountains themselves for this part of the regiment.

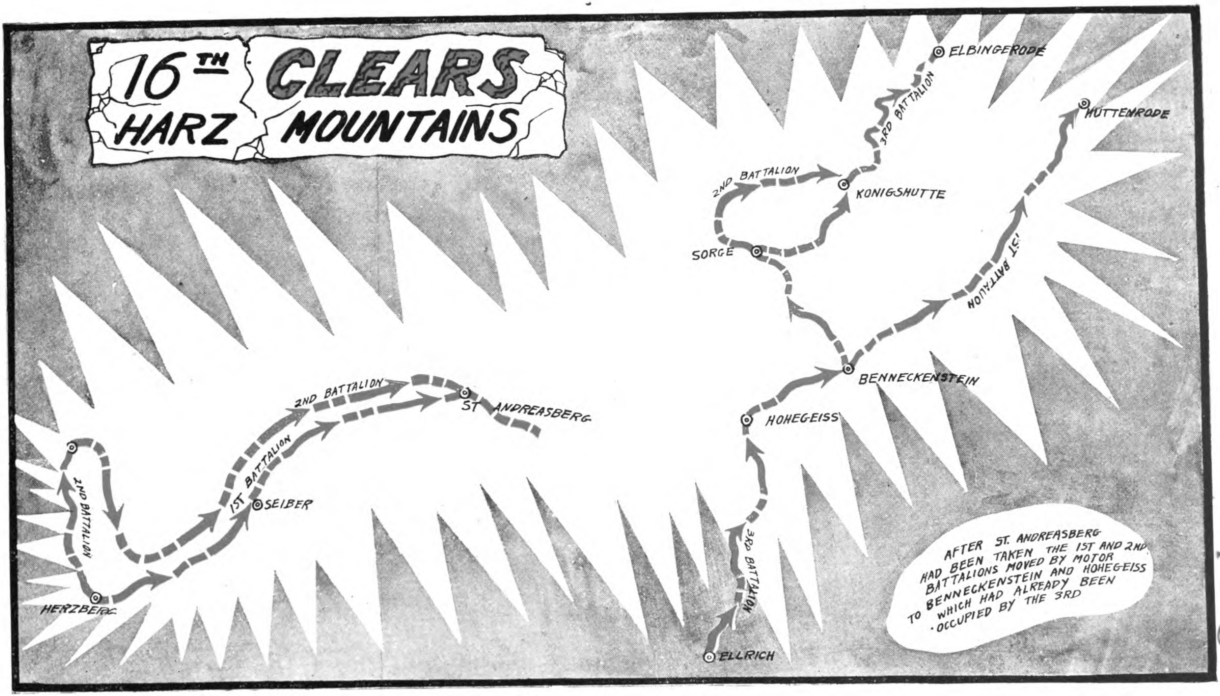
The Harz Mountain campaign, while short, was a tough grind for the infantry. Some days the going was so hard over rough, mountainous terrain that 500 yards an hour was the limit for foot troops even when unopposed.



After St. Andreasberg had been taken by First Battalion, snipers remained in their area. A Tank Destroyer (TD), from the 634th TD Battalion, moves out to cover infantrymen doing the final mopping up.

In the heavily forested mountains, road blocks were particularly effective. Sometimes the enemy would have blown trees down across the road for hundreds of yards. The terrain offered perfect positions for hundreds of strongpoints. Had the enemy been well organized instead of in a state of confusion, it might have taken weeks to dislodge him from these gloomy mountains.

During their first day's attack, the First Battalion encountered road blocks covered by dug-in infantry which was supported by seven tanks. As one block was cleared, the enemy retreated to the next, delaying but not halting the American force. The battalion eventually reached, cleared and occupied a portion of the town of Herzberg.


16TH CLEARS HARZ MOUNTAINS
HERZBERG
2ND BATTALION
1ST BATTALION
SEIBER
2ND BATTALION
ST ANDREASBERG
ELLRICH
3RD BATTALION
HOHEGEISS
BENNECKENSTEIN
SORGE
2ND BATTALION
KONIGSHUTTE
3RD BATTALION
ELBINGERODE
1ST BATTALION
HUTTENRODE

AFTER ST. ANDREASBERG HAD BEEN TAKEN THE 1ST AND 2ND BATTALIONS MOVED BY MOTOR TO BENNECKENSTEIN AND HOHEGEISS WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN OCCUPIED BY THE 3RD

Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Meanwhile the Second Battalion was working to the north trying for Lonau. Progress was slow. There were many road blocks covered by infantry with tank support and the automatic small arms fire from these forces was at times intense.

Col. Gibb was asking to have his Third Battalion returned to the regiment. This request was refused but the colonel's recommendation that the Third move from Ellrich to Benneckenstein, or its vicinity, was followed.

Late in the afternoon of the 13th, the Second Battalion reached Lonau and set about clearing it. Operating as the battalion did, with numerous spearheads having little contact with each other, many times the enemy remained behind the advancing troops in small pockets. There was considerable confusion and frequently rear echelon troops would take wrong roads, in attempting to contact forward elements, with disastrous results. Numerous American vehicles were knocked out and personnel killed or captured.

During this campaign Capt. Golden of Cannon Company was killed in an ambush while travelling along a road which had previously been traversed by a rifle company.

It was on the 13th that the Third Battalion, with "I" and "K" companies working abreast along the road, set out from Ellrich for the vicinity of Benneckenstein. The actual attack jumped off from Sulzhayn, about three miles north of Ellrich. 500 yards out of Sulzhayn the two companies encountered a strong point consisting of numerous automatic weapons and an anti-tank gun. They were held up for about two hours during which several men were killed and one tank attached from the 24th Cavalry Squadron was knocked out. Working ahead another thousand yards, the force was again held up by machine gun fire and a long road-block. The companies dug in for the night with their flanks extending up the steep slopes of mountains on either side of the road.

The First Battalion was pressing towards the town of Siebert. The going here was hard, also. Tanks, infantry and road blocks made passage along the road network dangerous and slow. Companies on the flanks, in the woods away from the road, could travel as fast as they could walk. However, they faced the necessity of maintaining contact with the troops clearing along the road which held up the entire battalion.

At 1830, all companies, in the First, were receiving fire all along the line. A bazooka team accounted for one Mark VI tank. Lt. Col. Driscoll thought it would be possible to work into the town that night. However, Col. Gibb ordered the battalion to "button up" for the night and send out patrols with bazookas to work on the remaining tanks.

All battalions had had between fifteen and twenty casualties each during the day. They had taken a total of 190 prisoners.

Plans for the next day called for the Second Battalion to come up and take the high ground along the road to St. Andreasberg, main objective in this area for the two battalions. The First was to work along the road and take the south half of the town while the Second worked on the north.

During the night, the First managed to clear the tanks from its path and "C" Company entered and cleared the town of Siebert, which lay northeast of the Second Battalion's Lonau.

On April 14th, the Third Battalion, which was still operating with the cavalry group, started again for Hohegeiss.

Scattered shots by German snipers disturb the stillness of St. Andreasberg, in the Harz Mts. The tank swings broadside across the street and offers cover for the foot troops as they seek out the murderous marksmen.

Clearing the strongpoint that had held it up the night before "I" and "K" worked along the road until another road block stopped the armor. Leaving the tanks to wait for road clearance, the two companies, followed by "L", continued pushing.

Another strong point was met at the road junction where roads forked to Hohegeiss and Benneckenstein. Plans had been changed during the day previous and the battalion was heading first for Hohegeiss after which it was to backtrack to the southeast to take Benneckenstein. At this road fork, the enemy had 20 mm guns, 105 mm anti-tank guns and in a short time, a considerable number of infantry. These troops apparently had been retreating to the southeast when they were met by this element of the 16th.

An hour later three SP guns came rolling down the road, apparently unaware of the presence of American troops.

Prior to this, the attached tank platoon had passed the road block which had been holding it up and caught up with the assault companies. With infantrymen operating the 50 calibre machine guns on two tanks, the crews of the 20 and 105 mm guns had destroyed their guns and fled. It was shortly after this that the enemy infantry appeared, and an hour later the three SP guns. One SP was knocked out with a bazooka by Staff Sgt. Carmen Turchiarelli, who as a private at Hamich, had accounted for two Mark VI tanks with the same weapon.

A few minutes later, another SP destroyed one of the American tanks. A stand-off of several hours ensued and it was not until late afternoon that the attack got underway again. "K" Company, on the left of the road faced only infantry and one SP. "I" Company on its side of the road encountered infantry and more anti-tank weapons. Two of that company's tanks were lost during the afternoon.

Finally, just before dark, the two companies reached the edge of woods about 500 yards from Hohegeiss. With their accompanying tanks laying down a heavy volume of machine gun and HE overhead fire, "K" swept into the town from the south and "I" from the east. Several buildings in the town were burning and most of the enemy had fled, only a few remaining to contest possession of the damaged little town. As the troops swept into town, enemy light artillery blasted building after building as "K" Company men entered them. However, through some accident of fate, no casualties were incurred.

Back in the area where the First and Second Battalions were fighting, the going was equally difficult. The First Battalion ran into enemy fire soon after moving out. The Second encountered less resistance.

Tanks and infantry again consituted the chief defensive forces of the enemy. Several Mark VI tanks and a number of heavy calibre SP's put up strong resistance, although it appeared after a while that the German tankers were drunk. They fired into the ground, into the air, at a ridge line on which there were no Americans and wound up throwing bottles.

Late in the afternoon, the attack had carried to within several hundred yards of St. Andreasberg. The battalions were on high ground with excellent observation into the town which was being hit by artillery fire. Roads leading out of the town to the rear were full of the enemy. It appeared at 1900 hours that their forces were pulling out leaving only a small force to delay the 16th.

The resistance in front of the First Battalion was decreasing. This was in part due to the heavy haul of prisoners during the afternoon, more than 150 having been netted. The Second was still facing a stiff fight. Several Americans who had been captured in the weird fighting of the past few days were being retaken at various points during this period.

Shortly after midnight, St. Andreasberg, burning from its artillery pounding, was cleared.

On the 16th, the Third Battalion took Benneckenstein. Having cleared the town of Hohegeiss at 2200 the night before, the battalion had expected to bring hot chow, which had been prepared, up to the men. It would have been particularly welcome since many men who had been on mountain outpost positions had not eaten for nearly thirty-six hours. However, direct orders from the corps commanding general forbade feeding the battalion until Benneckenstein had been taken. Ammunition resupply delayed the attack until about 0300. It would have been a simple thing to have brought food up during the interim, but this had been expressly forbidden.

A platoon of "G" Company moves into section of St. Andreasberg, in the Harz Mts. Heavy American artillery fire practically destroyed town where resistance was stubborn. April 15, 1945.

"K" and "L" companies entered the town about daylight, fought a short, brisk action in clearing the place, killed several Germans, captured many more and included among them a prize haul consisting of several high ranking Army and Navy officers part of an ordnance production board.

The First Battalion took over Second Battalion positions in St. Andreasberg while the Second worked down towards Hohegeiss from the northwest. The same type of resistance which had been encountured throughout this period slowed the battalion's advance. However, at 1600 the assault companies had secured two important crossroads and were continuing to advance.

That evening, the Third Battalion moved north to Sorg a village which was the center of a road net. The move was unopposed, although as the head of the battalion column reached the outskirts of Sorg, a large enemy armored force rumbled through the town at right angles to the path of the 16th unit's advance. After entering the town, a German SP put in an appearance and sat in the middle of three companies, which had established a perimeter defense until a round from a bazooka damaged it. At that time it started to retreat but soon caught fire and burned.

While the First Battalion was moving into an assembly area in the vicinity of Benneckenstein and the Second Battalion remained in position to defend to the north, Companies "K" and "L" moved in to take Tanne. "K" cleared the southwest portion of town in short order, killing a few Germans and driving an SP out of town. "L" company met stiffer resistance, suffering a few casualties. Late in the afternoon, an AT platoon jeep, on reconnaissance, was machine-gunned by SS troops who killed two men and wounded the platoon leader and two others severely.

On the 18th, all battalions resumed their push. Again the fighting was varied, ranging from weak resistance to fanatical defense of favorable positions.

"B" Company of the First Battalion ran into resistance early. Its commanding officer, Lt. Lawrence Strickland was killed. Under its executive officer, Lt. Hanna, it resumed the attack. Working in conjunction with "C" Company an advance was made to another enemy strongpoint from which poured heavy machine gun, rifle and bazooka fire. Tanks were called up and fired several rounds of canister at point blank range into the woods, the 50 and 30 calibre machine guns on the tanks riddled the woods, and an attached platoon of "D" Company's machine guns added to the hail of fire poured into the position.

However, the enemy fire continued without slackening and bazooka fire forced the tanks back. A flank attack by "C" Company under cover of heavy tank and machine gun fire finally forced the position and the advance continued. Throughout the day two squadrons of P-47's gave very close support to the attack by this battalion and when the approaches to the town of Rubeland were reached, the planes strafed dangerously close to the front of the advancing troops. Rubeland sat in a bowl surrounded by high cliffs. Machine guns set on these cliffs, tanks firing as they came down the road, and the infantry pouring a stream of small arms fire into the town, and the whole ground force aided by the strafing P-47's concentrated such a volume of fire on the town that it was taken with little resistance. Prisoners said that in five years of battle they had never come under such intense and deadly fire. Hundreds of prisoners had been bagged by the battalion during the day.

The Second Battalion was also collecting a large number of PW's as it advanced from the vicinity of Hohegeiss, eastward to Konigshutte. Stiff fighting occurred at several points. The original plan had called for the battalion to reach Konigshutte about noon. Actually, the Second was unable to push through to that point until 2000 hours in the evening. In the meantime, Companies "I" and "K" of the Third Battalion, driving north from Tanne had taken the town in the late afternoon. The Third's advance had been opposed by remnants of several units. Some Panzer people, a few SS and a large number of men from assorted units fought fiercely at some points and poorly at others.

The day's take of prisoners totalled 1911.

A few days before, Capts. Clark and Wilder and their driver, on reconnaissance, had taken a wrong turn and had not been seen again. Among the prisoners taken on the 18th was one from a German corps who assured his captors that he had talked to both officers and that they were uninjured.

The enemy resistance was breaking everywhere. Their state of disorganization was increasing to the point where units were no longer recognizable as such.

On the morning of the 19th, "I" and "L" Companies attacked towards Elbingerode. The approaches to the town were undefended and the two companies worked into the town meeting some small arms and 20 and 37 mm automatic fire. 100 PW's were taken in short order and the companies were firmly established by 0900. "K" company worked towards the town after daylight advancing north along the main road from Konigshutte. Enroute, the company picked up nearly 200 prisoners all of whom surrendered without a show of resistance. More and more prisoners were taken from the outlying parts of the town by the three companies. By nightfall the battalion total was slightly over 1000 for the day.

The First Battalion finished clearing Rubeland and attacked towards Huttenrode, 500 yards to the east. The attacking companies met small arms fire along the entire route, being held up by this fire at several points but continuing to advance until nigthfall when the town was entered and cleared. Friendly artillery fire hit the battalion at one point, inflicting about 15 casualties. Prisoners were taken by the hundreds.

The Second Battalion moved into Rothehutte during the night. After daybreak, "F" Company remained to defend the area and Companies "G" and "E" were moved to Rubeland after the First Battalion attacked towards Huttenrode.

During the day the 16th took 2483 prisoners, a total of 4500 for the two days past.

The next several days were spent in mopping up the woods in the vicinities of the towns occupied by elements of the regiment. Practically no resistance was met during these operations. One of the few exceptions occurred when an "I" Company platoon ran into machine gun fire which cut down five men. Two of these, the Platoon Sergeant and another man were very severely wounded.

The take of prisoners on the 20th totalled 924. On the 21st the haul dropped off to 424. On that day the 16th made contact at several points with the Eighth Armored Division of the Ninth Army which had driven into the mountains from the northwest.

A further drop to 181 prisoners occurred on the 22nd. A few more were picked up during the next several days as the 16th shared the area with the Eighth Armored which eventually took responsibility for the towns occupied by the battalions of the 16th.

On the 23rd and 24th, the regiment moved over 120 miles west and south to the vicinity of Marburg where a period of rest and rehabilitation ensued. It appeared that this occupation would last indefinitely. However, in a few days another move occured.

On April 27, the 16th made one of its longest moves of the European campaign when it went far to the east, by-passed recently captured Leipzig and then turned south towards Selb a Bavarian border town which was only a short distance from the point at which Czecho-Slovakia juts farthest west into Germany.

On the 28th, with the Third Battalion moving into Selb as the reserve for the regiment, the First and Second Battalions moved up on line. The Second was entirely within Czecho-Slovakia while part of the first was in that country with the remainder just over the border in Bavaria.

The action for the next 8 to 10 days was mainly defensive. Patrols went out to villages to the front of the positions and a few prisoners were taken every day. Enemy occupied villages were hit frequently and hard by artillery and occasional prisoners drifted in from the damaged towns.

One First Battalion patrol of 11 men went into one small town and disappeared. A day later one man returned to his company but the remainder of the patrol continued to be missing. A truck hauling water to the Second Battalion took a wrong turn, ran towards the German lines and was not seen again. While there was little activity, what there was was of a weird nature. It seemed unlikely that the war could last much longer but civilian and PW reports continued to indicate a large number of Germans were remaining in Czecho-Slovakia and that they still had considerable equipment, including armor.

Berlin fell, and still the regiment held to its positions. The Russians were driving west, the Americans east. More and more of Czecho-Slovakia was falling to Allied arms. There were a few instances of sabotage. A couple of Hitler's "Werewolf" youths were apprehended. German armies in Denmark, Holland and the north surrendered. Still the Germans in Czecho-Slovakia held out. Finally, on May 5th, orders came to advance eastwards. If the Germans wouldn't give up, they would be compelled to fight.

The Third Battalion moved from Selb to Eger (Cheb), in Czecho-Slovakia to take over the right flank of the regiment.

The push had been intended to start during the afternoon of the 5th. However, at 1345 hours, the order came to hold up and start the attack the next morning.

On a wet, misty morning, the last day of fighting for the 16th in this war began.

The First Battalion moved out, took a series of small villages with little or no resistance, collected a few prisoners and continued to work east until about noon when it encountered furious resistance near a small town. More than 20 casualties were incurred by "B" Company. One officer and three men were killed in this fire fight. The enemy at this point resisted savagely, held their ground tenaciously and surrendered only when their ammunition was exhausted. It was determined, after prisoners had been taken that the force was composed mainly of marines from the battleship "Admiral Scheer."

The Second Battalion was finding the going rough in spots, also, although their casualties were lighter. However, one man was killed and seven wounded in that unit.

To the south, the Third Battalion was advancing with no resistance, taking a few prisoners from each small town until Kulsam was reached. Here the enemy put up a fight for a bridge which had not been destroyed. A quick advance by "K" Company in the face of machine gun fire seized the bridge and wires to demolitions charges were cut before the bridge could be destroyed.

When the bridge had been taken, the Ninth Armored Division sent its Combat Comand A across the river and driving towards Falkenau (Falknow).

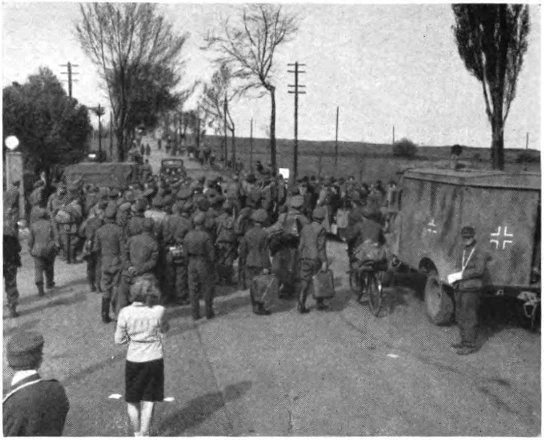
The ultimate objective in this drive was to have been Karlsbad (Karlovy Vary) and division had optimistically expected the 16th to reach Falkenau by night of the 6th. This was some thirty kilometers from Eger, a stiff walk had there been no fighting. However, the enemy did resist. Beyond Kulsam, his anti-tank guns knocked out four tanks of the armored column before they in turn were destroyed. By nightfall, despite the resistance, the 16th was a little more than half way to Falkenau. During the day the regiment had suffered 51 casualties. It developed that these were the last battle casualties of the war for the regiment.

The next morning, shortly after the attack was resumed, the commanding general of the First Division sent the following order: "Cease all forward movement. Take local security measures as necessary. Further instructions to follow."

Brig. Gen. George A. Taylor, Assistant Commanding General, First Division, former 16th CO. and interpreter Capt Carl Oelze, look on as Lt. Gen. Fritz Benicke, commander of German forces hear Elbogen, Czechoslovakia, signs surrender of all troops and equipment under his command. May 7, 1945.

It was not until a couple of hours later that the word finally came down that the Germans had signed a surrender and were attempting to communicate with their troops in Czecho-Slovakia and Austria to order them to stop fighting.

It was more than 40 hours before the surrender became official at 0001, 9 May, 1945, but to all intents and purposes, the battle had finally ended for the 16th at 0855 on 7 May, when the "Cease forward movement" order came down.



A crowd of German prisoners-to-be gathers at a crossroad to be given procedure to follow in order to avoid further confusion on the already choked roads in 16th Infantry sector. May 7, 1945.

German WAC's are addressed by their officer after arrival at assembly area under 16th Infantry control in Czecho-Slovakia. May 10, 1945.

The Third Battalion moved into Falkenau on the night of the 7th. The next day the hordes of Germans who were attempting to escape the Russians and surrender to the Americans began to stream through on the roads from Karlsbad.

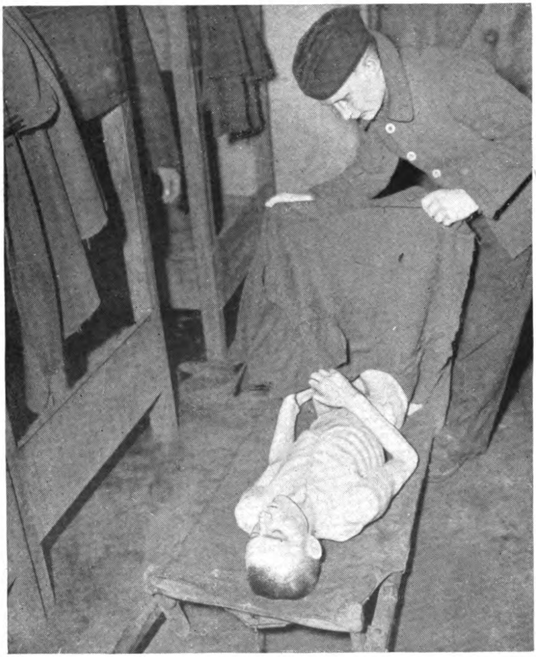
All day they came, The roads were jammed with their vehicles Thousands of soldiers laid down their arms and meekly submitted to confinement in concentration areas. Their wives and children accompanied many of them, contituting a problem for the conquering 16th.

The movement continued for two or three days. Handling of the myriads of beaten enemy was a monumental job for a unit as small as a regiment. More than 45,000 passed through the hands of the 16th during this period.

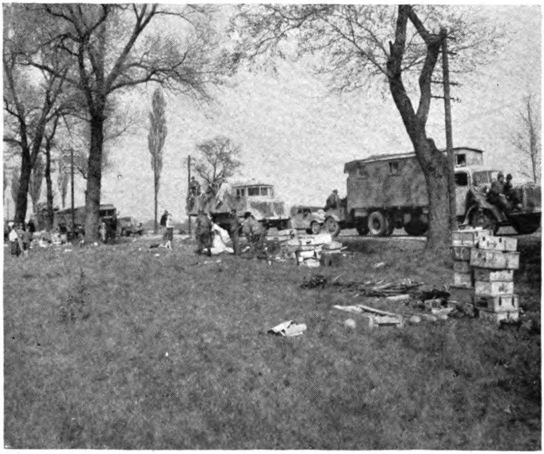
Once most of the PW's were taken, there remained the work of collecting displaced persons; returning Allied prisoners; working out agreements with the Russians on the handling of prisoners and displaced persons, policing the countryside; attempting to bring order out of the chaos caused by a nation's utter, humiliating defeat.

The 16th remained in eastern Czecho-Slovakia with forces stretching from Eger to Karlsbad for a month.

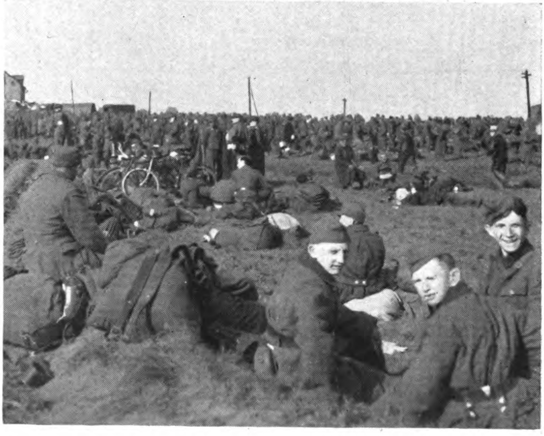
On June 8th, regiment moved a hundred miles west, back into Germany. The regimental CP was set up in Bamberg, the Second Battalion remained in the same town and the other battalions took over surrounding territory to the north, south and west.



Russian prisoner of war covers emaciated body of comrade who has just died of tuberculosis at Falkenau Reserve Lazaret, German Hospital Camp in Falkenau, Czechoslovakia. This camp was taken over by the Third Battalion. May 7, 1945.

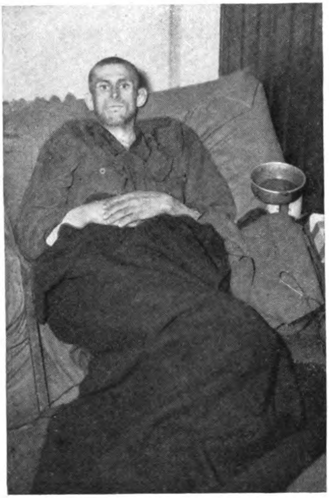


German prisoners who had moved across the surrender line near Elbogen, Czecho-Slovakia, unload their vehicles of all weapons prior to moving into the 16th's prisoner assembly area. May 8, 1945.



Some of the 45,000 German prisoners who surrendered to the 16th Infantry at the end of hostilities in Czecho-Slovakia. May 9, 1945.

Russian prisoner, who was beaten and starved by Germans while slave worker on a German farm, is shown in a hospital under 16th control, in Falkenau, Czecho-Slovakia.



It was here that the unit settled down to the work of Occupation. There were PW enclosures to be guarded, areas to be patrolled, cities to be policed. For the units not actively engaged in Occupation work at all times, there were training schedules. The organization has settled down for a long stay in Germany. Hundreds of the old men have gone home but the spirit of the 16th remains unchanged. It had a job to do in battle and it did it superbly. It has a job to do now that peace has come and all signs point to a performance equally as satisfactory.

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

The nation's highest award for valor, the Congressional Medal of Honor, has gone to four men from the 16th Infantry during World War II. Three of those men died in the action for which the award was made.

CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR.

Pvt. Robert T. Henry (Posthumous)	Company "B"
T/Sgt. Jake W. Lindsey	Company "C"
2nd Lt. Jimmie W. Monteith, Jr. (Posthumous)	Company "L"
T/5 John J. Pinder, Jr. (Posthumous)	Hq. Company

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS.

Eighty-Seven members of the 16th Infantry have been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. Three of those men have added the Oak Leaf Cluster to the original award.

Pfc. John W. Adams (Posthumous)	Company "H"
Capt. Paul Altomerianos (Posthumous)	S-1, 3rd Bn.
T/4 Stanley P. Appleby	Medical Detachment
Capt. John R. Armellino	C. O. Company "L"
T/Sgt. William R. Benn, Jr.	Company "A"
Pfc. Henry Berkowitz	Cannon Company
Capt. Joseph F. Berry (Posthumous)	Company "B"
2nd Lt. Kenneth Bleau	Company "G"
Capt. Everett L. Booth	C. O. Company "K"
Pfc. George H. Bowen	Medical Detachment
Capt. Victor H. Briggs	C. O. Company "C"
Capt. Victor P. Brosokas	S-2, Rgt.
Sgt. Arthur B. Buschlen (Posthumous)	2nd Bn. Hq. Company
Pfc. Peter Cavaliere	Company "H"
S/Sgt. Philipp C. Clark	2nd Bn. Hq. Company
1st Lt. Otto W. Clemens	Company "E"
Pfc. James Collins	Company "F"

S/Sgt. Curtis Colwell	Company "E"
Capt. Robert R. Cutler	C. O. Company "L"
Pvt. Marc C. Dauber (Posthumous)	Company "L"
Capt. Joseph T. Dawson	C. O. Company "G"
S/Sgt. Richard E. Deland	Company "L"
Lt. Col. Charles J. Denholm	C. O. First Bn.
Maj. Bryce E. Denno	Exec. Officer 2nd Bn.
1st Lt. William T. Dillon	Company "A"
Maj. Edmund F. Driscoll	C. O. 1st Bn.
Pfc. Albert J. Dugas	Company "I"
T/Sgt. Calvin L. Ellis	Company "E"
Capt. John G. W. Finke	C. O. Company "F"
1/Sgt. Lawrence J. Fitzsimmons	Company "E"
Cpl. Gibson Fryer	Hq. Company
Pfc. Richard J. Gallagher	Company "E"
1st Lt. Carl K. Giles, Jr.	Company "K"
Pfc. John V. Griffin	Company "L"
Pfc. Stanley Grzesik	Company "B"
1st Lt. Richard L. Harris	Company "D"
2nd Lt. Richard A. Hebenstreit, Jr. (Posthumous)	Company "I"
Lt. Col. Herbert C. Hicks, Jr.	C. O. 2nd Bn.
S/Sgt. Robert D. Hopes (Posthumous)	Company "H"
Lt. Col. Charles T. Horner, Jr.	C. O. 3rd Bn.
1st Lt. William N. Jackson	Company "I"
1st Lt. Kenneth L. Johnson	Company "F"
S/Sgt. Aaron B. Jones	Company "L"
Sgt. Carl Kaczmarek	Company "G"
1st. Lt. Stanley A. Karas	Company "G"
1st Lt. Robert J. Kemp	Company "I"
1st Lt. John Lycas	C. O. Company "C"
S/Sgt. Paul F. Mansfield	Company "L"
Sgt. John R. Mantville (Posthumous)	Company "I"
Lt. Col. John Matthews	Exec. Officer
S/Sgt. Frank Matwizyck (Posthumous)	Company "D"
Pfc. Samuel J. Mazotti	Company "M"
Pvt. Max E. McCarthy	2nd Bn. Hq. Company
2nd Lt. Atwood M. McElyea	Company "A"
Capt. Thomas N. Merendino	C. O. Company "B"
1st Lt. David E. Milotta	S-2, 1st Bn.
Cpl. Stephen J. Mulhall (Posthumous)	Company "M"

Pfc. Albert I. Nendza	Company "I"
Sgt. Alfred B. Nietzel (Posthumous)	Company "H"
Capt. Thomas F. O'Brien (With Cluster — Posthumous)	Cannon Company
Pvt. Joseph Occhino	Company "I"
Capt. James L. Pence	C. O. Company "A"
Sgt. Kenneth F. Peterson	Company "E"
Pfc. Victor E. Peterson (Posthumous)	Hq. Company
S/Sgt. Joseph W. Pilck	Company "G"
Capt. Kimball R. Richmond	C. O. Company "I"
S/Sgt. Paul W. Robey, Jr.	Company "K"
1st Lt. James L. Robinson (Posthumous)	Company "K"
Pfc. Sanford Rosen	Hq. Company
2nd Lt. Leonard E. Scott	Company "C"
Capt. John Settineri	Medical Detachment
1st Lt. John D. Shelby (With Cluster)	Company "H"
S/Sgt. Paul R. Shorter	Company "A"
2nd Lt. John M. Spalding	Company "E"
S/Sgt. Leeward W. Stockwell	Hq. Company
Sgt. Philip Streczyk	Company "E"
S/Sgt. Raymond F. Strojny	Company "F"
S/Sgt. Edward F. Tataras	Company "G"
Col. George A. Taylor	C. O.
Maj. Charles E. Tegtmyer	Regt. Surgeon
Maj. William R. Washington	Exec. Officer, 3rd Bn.
S/Sgt. James A. Wells	Company "L"
Pfc. Theodore T. Wilk	Company "F"
Capt. Charles A. Wirt	C. O. Company "G"
Capt. Edward F. Wozenski (With Cluster)	C. O. Company "G"
Sgt. William E. Zarnfaller	Company "L"

The long campaigning in this war, the hundreds of actions in which the 16th was engaged afforded ample opportunities for heroism. That infantrymen of the regiment rose to those occasions is borne out by the number of decorations awarded to men of the 16th. In addition to the Congressional Medals of Honor and the Distinguished Service Crosses previously listed, these awards have also been made.

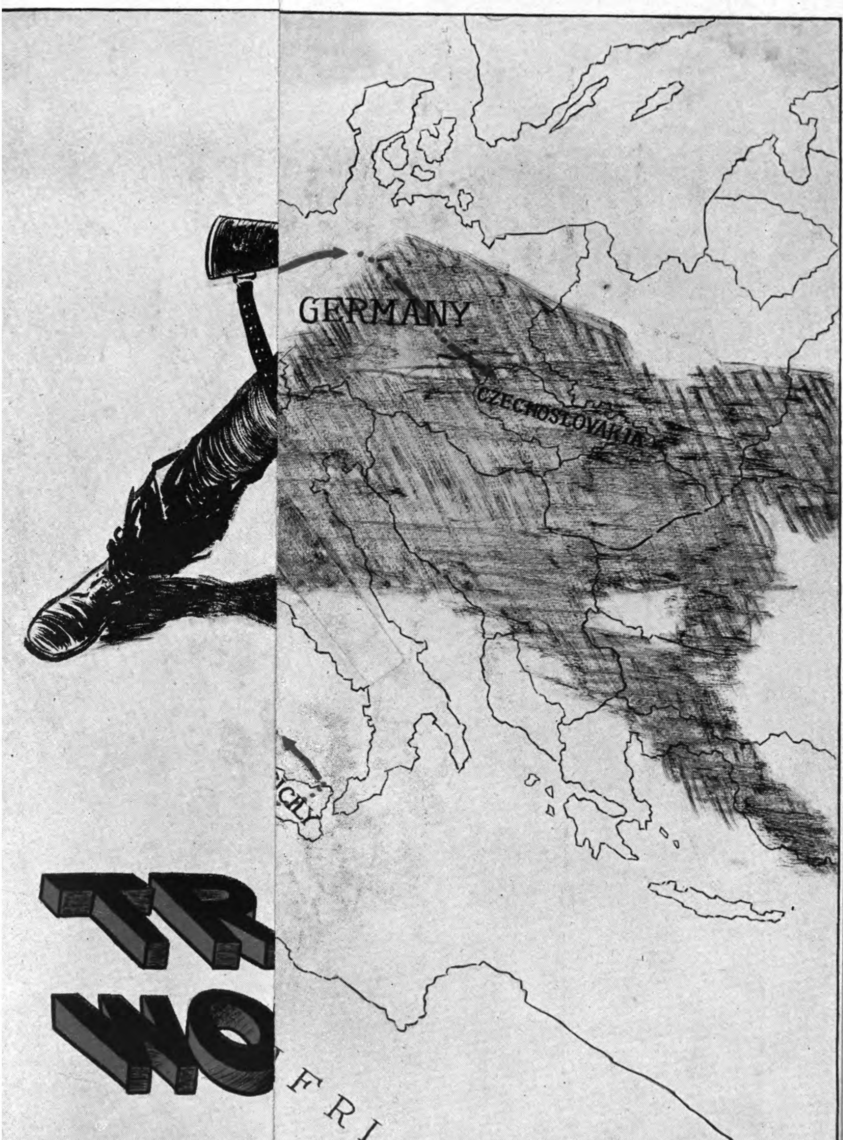
Silver Stars — 1926
Oak Leaf Cluster
to Silver Star 217

Bronze Stars — 2828
Oak Leaf Cluster
to Bronze Star — 810

Purple Hearts — 6896

CASUALTIES

	OFFICERS	EM
KIA	48	1202
WIA	262	5384
MIA	20	612
TOTAL	330	7198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